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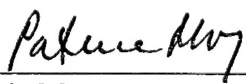
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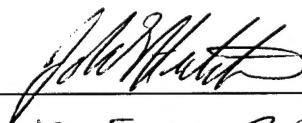
  
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Affirming a Nation:  
The Construction of U.S. National Identity  
during the Persian Gulf War and the War on Terrorism

John S. Hutcheson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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University of Washington

**Abstract**

Articulating a Nation:  
The Construction of U.S. National Identity during the Persian Gulf War and  
the War on Terrorism

John S. Hutcheson

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
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This thesis explores the construction of U.S. national identity by the president and the news media during two of America's most significant crises in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century – the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the September 11, 2001 attacks and subsequent war on terrorism. Quantitative and qualitative content analysis of major presidential addresses and editorials in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* before and during these crises suggests that 1) the two presidents used national identity as a strategic communication tool more so during the crises than in peacetime and that 2) editorials during the crisis periods offered constructions of U.S. national identity similar to those offered by the two presidents. Findings further reinforce the idea that the president wields great rhetorical power in shaping public discourse during a crisis and that the news media are not only a conduit of information during a crisis, but an active agent of mass mobilization.

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## Introduction

Theodore Roosevelt described the “idea” of America in 1909 by saying, “Americanism is a question of principle, of purpose, of idealism, or character; it is not a matter of birthplace or creed or line of descent.” His statement reflects traditional American conceptions of national identity – of a nation founded on liberal democratic ideals and principles rather than primordial attachment to soil or bloodlines (Beasley, 2001; Kammen, 1978; Nau, 2002). This conception of U.S. identity, that America is as much an “idea” as a country, has been a cornerstone of presidential rhetoric since the nation’s inception. In turn, it has spawned notions of American “exceptionalism” that pervade modern political discourse (Lipset, 1996; McEvoy-Levy, 2001) and permeate national institutions such as schools, churches and the mass media.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. My first goal is to examine how themes of U.S. national identity and exceptionalism were employed by presidents to unite American citizens and to mobilize support during two recent crises -- the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the “war on terrorism” following the September 11, 2001, attacks. For example, in his Aug. 8, 1990, address to the nation announcing the deployment of U.S. military forces to Saudi Arabia, President George H.W. Bush (1990) said:

Standing up for our principle is an American tradition. As it has so many times before, it may take time and tremendous effort, but most of all, it will take unity of purpose. As I’ve witnessed throughout my life in both war and peace, America has never wavered when her purpose is driven by principle. And in this August day, at home and abroad, I know she will do no less.

The Gulf War, I suggest, was an important moment for U.S. national identity as the country emerged from the shadow of its failure in Vietnam almost 20 years prior.

Indeed, as U.S. troops returned home at the end of the conflict, President Bush told them: “You not only helped liberate Kuwait, you helped this country liberate itself from old ghosts and doubts” (Bush, 1991).

In a very different way, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. also were an important moment for U.S. national identity. While the attacks shattered the nation’s sense of invulnerability, they left in their aftermath a political and cultural environment that encouraged Americans to unite in national grief as the country attempted to repair physical and psychological wounds. In his address before Congress and a national television audience nine days after the attacks, President George W. Bush (2001) included these comments:

I know there are struggles ahead and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror. This will be an age of liberty here and across the world. Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depend on us.

Such *nation-affirming* language seems a clear example of what Manheim (1991, 1994) has termed “strategic political communication,” in which political leaders craft their public discourse and communications with the goal to create, control, distribute, and use mediated messages as a political resource. Such careful management of the political and news environments by political elites has become widespread in modern politics (see Billeaudeau, Domke, Hutcheson & Garland, 2003; Domke, Watts, Shah, & Fan, 1999; Herman, 1993; Pfetsch, 1998; Protess et al., 1991; Watts, Domke, Shah, & Fan, 1999; Zaller, 1992), and seems particularly likely to occur during crises such as the 1991 Gulf

War and September 11 terrorist attacks when political leaders attempt to mobilize the mass public to support political or military actions.

The second goal of this thesis is to examine whether and if so, how, the nation's news media – in this case, the editorial staffs of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* – supported these presidents' communication strategies by echoing these themes, in particular in editorial content. In both crises, I expect that the national identity themes being emphasized by political leaders surfaced in the institutional voices of a U.S. news media that scholars (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Lewis, 2001) argue already plays a crucial role in the day-to-day construction and maintenance of national identity. The importance of examining the relationship between presidential rhetoric and the news media in the Gulf War and September 11 crises is underscored by evidence suggesting that public attention was fixated on the news media in both crises. During the Gulf War period, Americans in record numbers (Gallup, 1991b) tuned to the Cable News Network as it redefined the way wars were covered (Fialka, 1991; Kellner, 1992; MacArthur, 1992). Similarly, the "news interest" of U.S. adults was markedly high in the days, weeks, and months following September 11; for example, well into December 2001 roughly half of randomly sampled U.S. adults indicated they were "very closely" following news about the September 11 attacks and subsequent U.S. campaign against terrorism, the highest level of sustained public interest in the news in more than a decade (Pew, 2001).

In such environments, it seems likely that both presidents engaged in "strategic" communications, with a particular focus on affirming elements of U.S. national identity.

Further, some scholars (Bloom, 1990; Calabrese & Burke, 1992; Deutsch & Merritt, 1965; Zaller, 1994a) suggest that the president and other elites exert their greatest influence over news coverage and, ultimately, public opinion during moments of crisis when greater-than-usual numbers of citizens pay attention to politics and news coverage. If so, crises such as the Persian Gulf War and the September 11 terrorist attacks represent ideal contexts to analyze the appropriation and manipulation of national identity as two presidents attempted to mobilize and engender support among the mass public.



## **Chapter I: National Identity and Presidential Communications**

National identity, considerable scholarship suggests (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Connor, 1991; Seton-Watson, 1977; Smith, 1971, 1986), is a constructed and public national self-image, based on membership in a political community as well as history, myths, symbols, language, and cultural norms commonly held by members of a nation. Further, Schlesinger (1991) contends that national identity is a specific form of collective identity that is simultaneously “one of inclusion that provides a boundary around ‘us’ and one of exclusion that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them’” (p. 301).

Much of the scholarship surrounding nations, nationalism, and national identity has focused on theories of the origins of nations and reasons for their emergence. “Primordialists” contend that the nation is an entity deeply rooted in history, culture, and myth and embedded in human nature; according to this view, formation of nations was inevitable as populations engaged in an ongoing process of self-realization (e.g., Connor, 1991; Seton-Watson, 1977; Smith, 1971, 1986). In contrast, “modernists” posit that the nation is essentially a modern invention, arising more as a result of political forces than cultural awakening. These forces include industrialization (Gellner, 1983), emerging capitalist economic systems (Hobsbawm, 1990), and the rise of vernacular languages in a burgeoning system of print capitalism that produced mass numbers of books and newspapers (Anderson, 1991).

This research aligns with the modernist perspective and contains the assumption that invented or “imagined” nations (Anderson, 1991) necessarily must construct and continuously re-construct their identities in a public manner. Niebuhr (1967), for

example, argues that each nation develops a positive “social myth” to distinguish it from other nations, justify its existence, and defend its interests; these myths appeal to the “collective self of the nation” by framing historical events in positive lights and establishing a sense of superiority over other nations (p. 40). Such myths are propagated by national leaders (Bloom, 1990; Hutchinson, 1994; Poole, 1999) and disseminated through political and cultural institutions such as schools, churches, and the mass media (Bloom, 1990; Deutsch, 1953).

Notably, however, Bloom (1990) suggests that these myths are not enough to sustain a nation. He argues that a nation-state, once created, will endure only if its mass citizenry forms a *psychological identification* with the nation that prompts an internalization of national symbols. This idea is consistent with principles of social identity scholarship (see for instance, Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggest that membership in groups and the emotional significance attached to those groups form the basis of a person’s social identity. To be specific, group memberships, including membership in the nation, have the potential to offer members a sense of esteem and positive distinctiveness, particularly through comparisons to “out-groups” on social dimensions important to the in-group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Some group memberships are more salient than others, and the salience of these memberships can vary depending on context. Particularly in the arena of international relations, scholars (e.g., Bloom, 1990; Katz, 1965; Rivenburgh, 2000) argue that strong identification among citizens with the nation is necessary to ensure that competing sub-national identities (such as ethnic, family, religious) will be suppressed

and mobilization to defend the nation will occur if it is threatened. Further, this scholarship suggests that when the “national in-group” becomes highly salient, political leaders might be better able to mobilize public sentiment toward a political goal by using communication strategies that emphasize positive themes of national identity (Bloom, 1990; Cottam & Cottam, 2001; Hutchinson, 1994; Niebuhr, 1967).

Bloom (1990), in his description of a “national identity dynamic,” distinguishes between *identity-protection* strategies and *identity-enhancing* strategies. *Identity-protection* strategies, he argues, are used when the nation or its interests are directly threatened, and mass mobilization is necessary to counter the threat. *Identity-enhancing* strategies, he contends, are used by political leaders in the absence of a direct threat, to link national pride and esteem to proposed actions. For example, Bill Clinton argued that America had a *moral* obligation to intervene in conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. America faced no direct threat from these two conflicts, so the president was forced to use rhetorical strategies that enhanced national esteem and affirmed America’s self-image as a benevolent world leader in order to justify intervention.

### ***National identity and the United States***

This research takes as a given the argument of some scholars (e.g., Calabrese & Burke, 1992; Higham, 1999; Hutchinson, 1994) that specification of a singular American national identity is a challenging, perhaps, impossible task. Nonetheless, such a conclusion does not mean that the concept of national identity is irrelevant to the ways in which politics and mass communication play out in the United States. For example, Beasley (2001) found that U.S. presidents since George Washington often have

articulated American uniqueness as grounded in certain civil-religious beliefs and core values of liberty, equality, and self-government. Indeed, Calabrese and Burke (1992) describe these core, democratic ideals as “the mythology of American individual freedom” (p. 62). They and others (Hutchinson, 1994; Kammen, 1978; Poole, 1999) note that while the reality of these individual freedoms often has not lived up to the myth, these values nonetheless remain central to U.S. idealism. Further, as a military, economic, and cultural “super-power” the United States derives much of its identity from its position vis-à-vis other nations (Bloom, 1990; Hutchinson, 1994; Niebuhr, 1967; Poole, 1999; Rivenburgh, 2000; Schlesinger, 1991). For example, a core part of U.S. identity for decades was the nation’s oppositional role to the Soviet Union (Bloom, 1990; Hutchinson, 1994; Schlesinger, 1991); stopping the spread of communism was not only policy, it defined Americans’ sense of purpose and shaped interactions with other nations (Bloom, 1990).

Notably, several scholars (e.g., Bloom, 1990; Cottam & Cottam, 2001; Hutchinson, 1994; Hutcheson et al., forthcoming; Niebuhr, 1967) highlight the ability and motivation of U.S. government leaders to manipulate national discourse and symbols in order to engender and mobilize support among the mass public for specific political goals. Indeed, by claiming that culturally embedded symbols are threatened by another nation or international actor, U.S. leaders at times have been able to activate strong nationalist feelings that typically reside below the surface in the absence of international conflict (Bloom, 1990; Katz 1965; Mishler, 1965). This body of scholarship, then, suggests that U.S. government elites often strategically articulate a conception of

American national identity that will engender public support and embed a strong sense of collective identity; analysis of such strategies may offer insight into the relations among political elites, mass communication, and the sense of U.S. nationhood.

***National identity, the presidency, and crisis***

Denton and Woodward (1990) highlight the singular power and stature of the presidency: "The presidency is an office, a role, a persona, constructing a position of power, myth, legend, and persuasion. Everything a president does or says has implications and communicates 'something.' Every act, word, or phrase becomes calculated and measured for a response" (pp. 199-200). Further, the presidency becomes even more salient during a crisis, when the public looks to the president for leadership and vision to guide the nation (Kuypers, 1997). Windt (1983) argues that presidents wield great rhetorical power in crisis situations, reasoning that as long as the "crisis" event is not a direct attack on the United States, the crisis must be, at least in part, "rhetorically created by the president" (p. 62). While Windt neglects the ability of other actors such as Congress and the media to rhetorically construct a crisis, I am persuaded by his view that in many contexts, the situation alone does not define the crisis; rather the context, *in combination with the president's response*, does.

Further, it is imperative to note in potential crisis contexts that presidents *ask for support* for their policies, *not for debate* on what should be done (Kuypers, 1997). In so doing, the president's ultimate goal is to rhetorically frame a crisis in a way that elicits support for his policy or downplays the significance of the crisis if it is politically advantageous to do so. If the president decides to treat a situation as a crisis, his

communications typically exhibit two key characteristics: 1) Establishment of a melodrama between good (U.S.) and evil (the enemy); and 2) Framing of the policy to be implemented and the support requested as *moral acts* (Windt, 1983). Successful definition of a crisis, thus, depends on defining an enemy (evil) to contrast with the United States (good) and linking proposed solutions to values embedded within American culture (Ivie, 1980, 1990; Kuypers, 1997; Windt, 1983).

The importance of “the enemy” cannot be understated. In his study of presidential rhetoric and foreign policy, Ivie (1990) argues, “The nation’s adversary is characterized as a mortal threat to freedom, a germ infecting the body politic, a plague upon the liberty of humankind, and a barbarian intent upon destroying civilization” (p. 72). Klope (1986) observes that presidents not only demonize and dehumanize their adversaries during crises, but they also place them in the context of “socially sanctioned myths” (p. 348). For example, for nearly 50 years, America’s “enemy” was the Soviet Union, and the dominant “myth” presidents used to frame U.S. foreign policy was the Cold War meta-narrative (Bloom; 1990; Ivie, 1990; Kuypers, 1997; McEvoy-Levy, 2001; Niebuhr, 1967). With the end of the Cold War, however, the rhetorical construction of crises became problematic, particularly for former U.S. President Clinton in conflicts with Haiti and North Korea and in Bosnia (Kuypers, 1997). Post-Cold War conflicts, therefore, have forced presidents to draw on new contextual frames and engage in significantly more communicative effort to generate support for a national response.

Drawing upon these bodies of scholarship, I posit that in both (a) the months leading up to and during the Gulf War in 1991 and (b) the months following the terrorist

attacks of September 11, 2001, the Presidents Bush publicly engaged in strategic political communications in order to build support both domestically and abroad for military action and, in the case of the September 11 attacks, to restore the confidence and to heal the psychological wounds of Americans. In particular, I argue that a core element of the U.S. rhetorical campaign in each crisis was the usage of national identity communication strategies — that is, utilization of specific language and images by the presidents with the goal of fostering, maintaining, and reinforcing a collective U.S. identity and eliciting support for presidential decisions. Based on previous research, these communication strategies seem likely to include some, if not all, of the following emphases:

- affirmation of American values and ideals that drew upon the U.S. “mythology” of individualism, liberty, and egalitarianism (Beasley, 2001; Calabrese & Burke, 1992);

- affirmation of U.S. efficacy, strength, and dominance, thereby tapping into the nation’s long-established self-image as a world “super-power” (Bloom, 1990; Niebuhr, 1967);

- emphasis upon unification among Americans across ideological and racial lines, which parallels a pattern in presidential inaugural rhetoric of emphasizing national unity within diversity (Beasley, 2001);

- portrayal of the international community as united with America in its efforts (a) to expel Iraq from Kuwait in the Gulf War and (b) eradicate terrorism following the September 11 attacks; use of religious themes; and description of the conflict in terms of a “noble” or “just” cause, all of which position the United States as a moral leader among nations (Lipset, 1996; Niebuhr, 1967);

- articulation of distinct threats to nation and citizens, a strategy designed to mobilize the public toward a common national goal while suppressing sub-national agendas (Bloom, 1990);

- and finally, demonization and dehumanization of the “enemy,” which follows a familiar good-versus-evil discourse employed effectively during previous U.S. conflicts (Brands, 1999; Ivie, 1980).

While many of these themes are part of everyday presidential rhetoric, it seems plausible that their use would increase in a crisis as enemies of the nation are identified and vilified, and the threats they allegedly pose are made more explicit. Further, crisis situations involving international actors create a context in which a nation’s identity is potentially threatened or called into question and the need to defend or enhance that identity is greater (Bloom, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the Gulf War, for example, the United States sought to enhance its identity as a moral world superpower as it struggled to escape from the shadow of Vietnam. In the case of the September 11 attacks, core elements of the nation’s identity – its economic and military power – had been devastated, and many Americans perceived their way of life as under attack. The extraordinary circumstances posed by these two crises, combined with the presidents’ need to rally the nation, form the rationale behind Hypothesis 1:

**H1:** Presidential speeches *after* the beginning of each crisis (deployment of U.S. troops to Persian Gulf on 8/8/90, and terrorist attacks on 9/11/01) will contain more national identity-affirming themes than presidential speeches before these dates.



The use of national identity communication themes by the Presidents Bush seems likely to have served at least two purposes. First, these communications would highlight the benefits and challenges that accompany citizenship in the United States, which likely contributed to a revival of American patriotism during both crises, evident in rituals such as flying flags and singing national hymns like “God Bless America” in public settings. More importantly, use of these national identity themes undoubtedly helped to mobilize and galvanize public support for both the Gulf War and the “war on terrorism.” This seems particularly likely in the case of the September 11 attacks as subsequent opinion polls showed unprecedented levels of approval for President George W. Bush and sustained high support for the U.S. military campaign against terrorism (Gallup, 2001a; 2001b; 2001c). Likewise, while public opinion fluctuated somewhat during the troop buildup preceding the Gulf War,<sup>1</sup> the majority of the nation supported President George H.W. Bush as he isolated Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and argued a moral imperative for taking action to oust the Iraqis from Kuwait (Kellner, 1992; Lipset, 1996; MacArthur, 1992). Further, after military action began, public approval for President Bush’s handling of the crisis rose significantly, reaching 92% in late February 1991 (Gallup, 1991c). After the war ended, his *overall* job approval among the U.S. public was 86% (Gallup, 1991a).

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is based on Gallup Organization data retrieved from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research archive. Weekly Gallup polls starting in early August 1990 indicate that President Bush initially received high levels of approval for his handling of the crisis -- 80% approval on Aug. 9 (Gallup, 1990b) -- but that approval had dropped to about 60% by mid October (Gallup, 1990a) and remained there. Once the U.S.-led bombing campaign began in mid January however, approval levels shot back above 80% and remained there for the duration of the conflict.

Further it seems likely that the period leading up to initiation of military action in each crisis served as the key mobilization period as each president attempted to rally the nation for war. In the Gulf War context, this period spanned from Iraq's Aug. 2, 1990, invasion of Kuwait until the initiation of the U.S.-led coalition bombing campaign on January 15, 1991. In the case of the September 11 attacks, this period encompassed the month directly following the attacks and culminated with the start of the military campaign in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. During these two timeframes, I argue that the brunt of the rhetorical groundwork was accomplished as each president sought to activate strong feelings of national identity and channel those feelings toward support of national objectives. Thus, while national identity remained salient throughout the duration of each crisis, the presidential communications during the *mobilization* periods seem likely to contain more national identity-related discourse than after the initiation of military action. With this view, I offer Hypothesis 2:

**H2:** Presidential speeches during the crisis period for both the Gulf War and September 11 attacks will contain more national identity-affirming themes in the period leading up to the initiation of military action than the period following initiation of military action.

At the same time, it is certainly the case that these two crises have very different characteristics, and it is possible the two presidents used national identity in different ways in order to mobilize support for their objectives. Notably, the rhetorical challenge of mobilizing the nation seemed greater for the Gulf War: in the absence of a direct attack on the United States, George H.W. Bush faced a heavier burden as he tried to explain to the nation why the conflict was in the America's vital interests. Conversely, George W.

Bush had much less difficulty convincing the nation that its interests were at stake after the September 11 attacks. However, he faced the daunting challenge of acting as the nation's "chaplain" as he attempted to transform the country's grief into resolve for the war ahead (Silberstein, 2002). With these differing contexts in mind, I offer a research question to explore potential differences between the two presidents in their use of national identity themes during their respective crises:

**RQ1:** Are there significant differences *between* the Presidents Bush in the presence of national identity themes in their crisis speeches?

## Chapter II: National Identity and the Media

The mass media, even absent a crisis, play an important role in the day-to-day construction, articulation, and dissemination of a nation's identity, a process referred to as "banal nationalism" by Billig (1995) and Lewis (2001). This "banal nationalism" consists of subtle reminders to the mass public of membership in the national community, as the words "we," "us," and "our" permeate everyday media discourse. These and other commonly used signifiers are the foundation for the mundane yet pervasive and, I suggest, *politically necessary* construction of national consciousness in modern societies. In particular, the daily production of banal nationalism by elites and in the media naturalizes the idea among the mass public that "the nation" takes precedence over other forms of collective identity and perpetuates notions of distinctiveness and superiority over other cultures (Edensor, 2002).

In times of national crisis, however, evidence suggests that the subtlety of banal nationalism dissipates as the media assume a more overt role in the construction and articulation of national identity (Bloom, 1990; Edensor, 2002; Gans, 1979; Hutcheson et. al., forthcoming). For example, in his examination of *New York Times* editorials following September 11, Lule (2002) argues that in its tributes to victims and heroes the *Times* assumed the role of "chief priest and state scribe," attempting to mend America's social fabric (p. 287). In crisis situations political leaders attempt to give meaning to events in ways that will bring about public support and mobilization. Mass media attempt to do much the same thing and are often dependent on the strategic communications of these government officials to help determine that meaning, making it

more likely that a government-centric view of national identity permeates public discourse. Therefore, if positive themes of national identity were indeed pervasive in George H.W. Bush's Gulf War speeches and President George W. Bush's post-September 11 public communications, I argue that such pro-United States or *nation-affirming* themes were also present in the editorials of elite newspapers, due in large part to the interaction of several individual-level and institutional influences.

The first rationale for arguing that national identity themes appeared in newspaper editorials is that most journalists at U.S. news outlets are U.S. citizens, and their reporting and opinions almost inevitably reflect ethnocentric biases (see Gans, 1979; Rivenburgh, 2000; Tuchman 1978). As members of the national in-group, journalists are likely to possess many of the same cultural values and beliefs that other members of the nation possess — values and beliefs that act as a filter through which news content is produced (Gerbner, 1964; Hallin, 1986; Tuchman, 1978). Ethnocentric reporting has been found to be most acute in coverage of U.S. involvement in international events (Calabrese & Burke, 1992; Gans, 1979) and seems likely to reflect nationalist themes in crisis situations in which there is a perceived threat to national interests or national security (Bloom, 1990; Brookes, 1999). In the case of both crises in this study, it seems probable that U.S. journalists' sense of national identity — like that of many other citizens — became heightened, and that this increased sense of American-ness would be reflected to varying degrees in subsequent media discourse.

A second reason to expect a certain degree of nationalist sentiment in media discourse during crises is an institutional one -- the economic pressure to maintain

audience interest and stay competitive. If, as Zaller (1994b, p. 267) argues, "National unity is good politics," then it also may be good business for news media. In the Gulf War, CNN's unprecedented coverage began a new era of war reporting and turned a fledgling cable news operation into a respected institution. After September 11, Fox News Channel experienced significant ratings increases, consistently surpassing rival CNN, as some commentators (e.g., Rutenberg, 2001; Smith, 2001) accused the network of overly patriotic coverage. In a similar vein, countless news organizations incorporated the colors of red, white, and blue into their promotions during this period. Similarly, while newspapers are not held prisoner by the 24-hour news cycle in the same way as cable television networks, they still must balance good journalism with business and editorial practices that encourage readers to continue using their product.

A final, also institutional reason to expect themes of national identity to appear in editorials is the political bipartisanship that existed during both crises, although there are some key differences. The cooperation between the president and both parties in Congress was especially strong following the September 11 attacks. This cooperation fostered a one-sided discourse among U.S. government elites, offering the news media few alternative viewpoints to choose from within official circles. As a result, journalists following the news practice of "indexing" their coverage and language to that of U.S. government elites (e.g., Althaus, Edy, Entman, & Phalen, 1996; Bennett, 1990; Entman & Rojecki, 1993) had little choice but to adopt a U.S. identity-affirming discourse.

During the Gulf War build-up, there was initial agreement in Congress about the first deployment of U.S. troops to Kuwait as a defensive measure to protect Saudi Arabia

and safeguard American interests (see Zaller, 1994a; Zaller 1994b). However, congressional Democrats were angry at President Bush after he ordered a second deployment of troops in November 1990; further, the resolution authorizing use of force on January 12 passed by only 52-47 in the Senate, indicating the president had a tenuous mandate, at best, to use force against the Iraqis. Nonetheless, Zaller (1994b) argues that a real opposition movement never materialized in Congress, as Democrats did not want to threaten national unity by opposing the president in the midst of a crisis. Thus, while the first President Bush did not have the outright mandate to use force during the Gulf War that the second President Bush had after the September 11 attacks, the lack of a strong and vocal opposition in Congress throughout the duration of the crisis may have contributed to editorial coverage that incorporated many of the same themes that the Bush administration was using to rally the nation for war. With all of this in mind, then, I offer Hypothesis 3:

**H3:** Editorials *after* the beginning of each crisis will exhibit a greater number of national identity themes and more pro-U.S. valence within these themes than editorials before these dates.

Further, I am interested in the presence of national identity themes *over time* in editorials during these crises. If as Kiewe (1994) argues, a crisis depends on the perception of immediacy and urgency, what happens to editorial discourse over time as the initial crisis moment recedes into the past? In the case of the Gulf War, President Bush worked over a five-month period to build domestic and international support for a war that many Americans were unsure was vital to U.S. interests. The themes of national identity being advanced by President Bush and members of his administration may have

been tempered early on in editorial pages as the nation came to grips with the nature of the crisis and discussed options for resolving it. But once the fighting began and U.S. military successes began to mount, I posit that editorials responded with more frequent use of national identity themes and stronger pro-U.S. valence for those themes.

Consequently, Hypothesis 4 states:

**H4:** Editorials in the Gulf War period (8/8/90 to the president's 3/6/91 "victory" speech) will exhibit an *increasing* trend over time in the number of national identity themes and pro-U.S. valence of those themes, as U.S. military successes mounted and "victory" was achieved.

In the case of the September 11 attacks, a different dynamic may have been at work. Editorials in the first month after the attacks likely contained a great deal of national identity-related themes, as the shock was still fresh and the president worked to unite the nation and mobilize it for war. But as the "war on terrorism" went on, the volume of these themes in editorials and their pro-U.S. valence may have decreased as the urgency of the crisis dissipated, the difficulty of "victory" became obvious, and domestic political issues competed for space on the editorial pages. With this in mind, I offer Hypothesis 5:

**H5:** Editorials in the "war on terrorism" period (9/11/01 attacks to the president's 2002 State of the Union address) will exhibit a *decreasing* trend over time in the number of national identity themes and pro-U.S. valence of those themes, as September 11 events faded and the difficulty of "victory" became apparent.

Additionally, one of the goals of this thesis is to explore the link between the president and news media in times of crisis. To that end, I am interested in how newspaper editorials following presidential national addresses might *respond* to the president's emphasis upon national identity. If, as some scholars suggest, the public and



the media look first to the president for answers and for leadership during a national crisis (Zaller & Chiu, 1996), then it is possible that his major public addresses during a crisis might have a significant effect on editorials immediately afterward, particularly when comparing these editorials to editorials that are further removed from the addresses. Thus

I offer Research Question 2-A:

**RQ2-A:** During the crisis periods, do editorials in the two days immediately following each presidential national address contain more national-identity discourse than editorials in the following five days?

Further, I am interested in potential differences between media organizations – in this study, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* — in their use of national identity themes during the two crises. For instance, proximity to the September 11 attacks probably contributed to the presence of national identity themes in both papers. It seems plausible, however, that due to the degree of devastation and the death toll in New York City after the attacks, the *Times* might have exhibited stronger pro-American tendencies than the *Post* during that crisis. To explore this issue, I pose a final research question:

**RQ2-B:** For each crisis, are there significant differences *between* news organizations in the presence of national identity themes in editorials?

### **Chapter III: Method**

This study involved content analysis of a total of (a) 26 major addresses by the Presidents Bush and (b) 718 editorials in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* during two major U.S. crises: (1) the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf crisis, including the troop buildup and Desert Storm military campaign, and (2) the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the first several months of the U.S.-led “war on terrorism.” The content analysis coding scheme for this study draws upon work that suggests much of national identity is derived from (1) a nation’s positive notions of self — embodied in cultural/national myths, values, and rituals; and (2) from a nation’s perceived distinctiveness in relation to others, a notion that becomes increasingly salient in times of crisis involving other international actors. The coding categories for both addresses and editorials are designed to capture elements of these two aspects of national identity.

#### ***Coding of presidential addresses***

All of the addresses (See Appendices A and B for a full list) were downloaded from the World Wide Web. Addresses by President George H.W. Bush are available via his official library (<http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/papers>), while those by George W. Bush are available at the White House news archive ([www.whitehouse.gov/news](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news)). After examining all the content on these sites during the crisis time frames, I identified 12 key addresses for President George H.W. Bush and nine for President George W. Bush during their respective crises. These were chosen because they were significant in scope and were specifically created to address the crises at key points during each crisis. Further,

with a few exceptions during the Gulf War crisis,<sup>2</sup> each of these addresses was broadcast to the nation on live television, ensuring the widest possible dissemination and subsequent coverage by news media.

This sample was purposive because my goal was to study the president's public communications that would likely receive the greatest media exposure and, thus, would offer the greatest opportunity for mobilizing public sentiment through the use of national identity-related themes. In addition, I selected three peacetime addresses for George H.W. Bush and two for George W. Bush in order to establish a baseline of national identity discourse in "normal" political times. In sum, analysis of these collections of addresses allowed me to compare and contrast national identity themes in peacetime and crisis periods, for both presidents.

Individual paragraphs in each address were the unit of data collection (the coding followed the paragraph formats on the web sites). Coding of *national identity themes* in the addresses is summarized below (See Appendix C for code book and code sheet):

a) Articulation of an enemy: language designed to construct or describe others as "enemies," including Saddam Hussein, nation of Iraq, September 11 terrorists, al-Qaeda, and Taliban; coders assigned a 1 if discussion of an enemy was present in the paragraph and a 0 if there was no mention of an enemy. This category included an open-ended coding to capture keywords such as "evil," "cowardly," and "murderous."

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<sup>2</sup> The period between September 11, 1990, and the beginning of the air war in Iraq on January 15, 1991, contained no nationally televised presidential addresses that dealt with the crisis. Rather than allowing this four-month time gap to remain, I selected and coded opening statements from three press conferences and one national radio address by President Bush during this timeframe. While, these "address" selections were not ideal, it was important to include them to have some sense of the president's rhetoric during this time frame. Indeed, analysis indicates that they do not differ significantly from other addresses in the sample in terms of usage of national identity themes.

b) Articulation of a threat: language that made explicit some sort of threat or ongoing danger to U.S. citizens, the nation, or America's vital interests. For example, if a presidential address or editorial said, "The terrorists want to destroy our freedoms and our way of life," this suggests a clear threat to the nation and Americans. Coders assigned a 1 if this type of language was present and a 0 if not.

c) Articulation of U.S. strength/efficacy: language that described the United States as active, strong, or successful in its ability to dominate its environment either within its borders or in relation to other nations. This category captured statements that present the United States or U.S. actors acting effectively or acting upon others. A statement such as "America will not fail in its mission to liberate the Kuwaiti people from Iraqi tyranny" suggests U.S. strength. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing U.S. strength/efficacy and a 0 if this theme was not present.

d) Articulation of U.S. weakness/ineffectiveness: language that described the nation as victimized, weakened, humbled or failing. This category captured statements that presented the United States or U.S. actors *acting ineffectively* or *being acted upon* by other entities. A statement such as "The terrorists claimed over three thousand American lives on September 11 and took America's sense of invulnerability with them," suggests U.S. weakness, presenting the nation as being "acted upon" rather than initiating action. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing U.S. weakness and a 0 if this theme was not present.

e) Articulation of U.S. values/principles: any reference to values, principles and ideals that are commonly used by political leaders to describe the United States, such as

freedom, democracy, pluralism, and capitalism. For example, a statement such as “They [the terrorists] hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other” affirms the U.S. values of freedom, pluralism, and democracy.

f) Articulation of U.S. unity: statements that described the American public as standing united. For instance, a statement such as “This nation has come together to grieve and to unite its resolve,” would be suggestive of U.S. unity. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing U.S. unity and a 0 if this theme was not present.

g) Articulation of U.S. divisions: statements that portrayed U.S. leaders or the American public as divided or disagreeing about important issues. A statement such as “Many of you [the public] are questioning why the United States is involved in this conflict” would be an example of divisiveness. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing U.S. divisiveness and a 0 if this theme was not present.

h) Articulation of world support of the United States: statements that described “the world” or “a coalition” or “U.S. allies” as supporting America or standing together with America. For instance, statements such as “I thank the world for its outpouring of support” or “Our coalition partners are standing firm with the United States against Iraq’s aggression” would be examples of world support. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing world support and a 0 if this theme was not present.

i) Articulation of world opposition to the United States: statements that portrayed “the world” or “a coalition” or “U.S. allies” as opposing America or raising concerns about U.S. actions. For instance, a statement such as “Our allies have protested our

deployment of additional troops to the region without their consultation” would be an example of world opposition. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs emphasizing world opposition and a 0 if this theme was not present.

j) Religious language: language that makes reference to God, either in the form of a prayer or in affirmative statements, such as “God is with us.” This category focused the speaker’s *invocation* of God rather than general “discussion” of religion or religious differences. Coders assigned a 1 for paragraphs with religious language and a 0 if this language was not present.

k) National character dimensions: This variable has six possible codings: 1) Discussion of American heroism and courage; 2) Discussion of American patriotism and loyalty; 3) Discussion of American resolve and determination in the face of adversity; 4) Discussion of Americans as peaceful and compassionate; 5) Discussion of America as part of a “great cause,” pursuing “noble goals,” or as motivated by “higher motives”; 6) Discussion of America as a world leader, of being able to impose its will or influence around the world, or its ability to lead other nations in pursuit of common objectives.

l) Positive and negative historical references: references to events in U.S. history such as previous wars that enhance self-image because of U.S. success (e.g. victory in World War II) or references to negative events such as U.S. failures in the Vietnam War. This category included an open-ended coding to record the positive and negative historical references. References to historical events with no clear accompanying valence were not coded.

### *Coding of newspaper editorials*

Editorials in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* constituted the second set of texts analyzed in this study. I chose editorials because they are the elements of news content that are most similar in purpose and structure to presidential addresses. They are designed not just to report facts, but also to offer opinions and analysis of the major issues of the day, and in some instances to offer calls to action. In addition editorials represent the *explicit institutional voices* of the newspapers and their views of the two crises under study. I chose the *Times* because it has a national focus and sets an agenda that many other news media tend to follow. Even though the *Post* does not have national circulation, both it and the *Times* are the two newspapers most widely read within official government circles, and seem likely to play an important role in public discourse during crises. Thus editorials in these two publications, while limited in scope, offer the most fruitful context for studying U.S. newspapers' explicit use of national identity related themes in the context of these crises.

I obtained roughly half the editorials in the sample from *New York Times* and *Washington Post* microforms and half from the Lexis-Nexis database. Selection of editorials was based on the dates of the presidential addresses: seven days of editorials were analyzed following each presidential address. If an editorial was related either to the Persian Gulf crisis or the September 11 attacks and their aftermath, it was coded. In the case of editorials following the two presidents' peacetime addresses, I coded editorials if they related directly to the addresses or if they dealt with some identifiably national or foreign policy issue. Under this scheme, an editorial following an inaugural

address that discussed the president's economic policy or trade relations with China was coded while an editorial about a local issue such as a transit strike in New York or Washington D.C. schools was not coded. Using these selection criteria, I identified and coded a total of 145 peacetime editorials (93 for President George H.W. Bush and 52 for President George W. Bush).<sup>3</sup>

For the crisis periods, I coded *every* crisis-related editorial within the date ranges of the addresses, not just editorials that appeared a week after each key speech. Thus, I started coding editorials the day after each presidents' first major address of the crisis and continued coding until one week after each presidents' last analyzed address. To be specific, editorial coding for the Gulf War crisis began August 9, 1990, the day after President Bush announced the deployment of U.S. troops to Persian Gulf to defend Saudi Arabia, and concluded March 13, 1991, one week after President Bush's March 6 address to a joint session of Congress following the end of the conflict. In all, I coded 213 editorials in the *Times* and *Post* that were related to the Persian Gulf crisis, 91 of which came in the one-week periods after each presidential address. Editorial coding for the September 11 attacks and the subsequent "war on terrorism" began September 12, 2001, the day after George W. Bush's first address to the nation, and concluded February 5, 2002, one week after the president's January 29 State of the Union address. In all, I coded 360 editorials in the *Times* and *Post* that were related to the September 11 attacks and "war on terrorism," 171 of which came in the one-week periods after each presidential address. In my analysis, I will present some findings based on only editorials

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<sup>3</sup> The disparity in the number of editorials is due to the fact that I coded three peacetime addresses for President George H.W. Bush and only two for President George W. Bush.



in the one-week period after each address and I will present other findings using the total number of crisis editorials. Table 1 presents a summary of my coding of peacetime and crisis newspaper editorials.

Table 1: Editorials by Time Frame for Each President

	Peacetime Editorials	Crisis Editorials
<b>George H.W. Bush</b>		
One week after address	93	91
All others	0	122
<i>Totals</i>	<i>n=93</i>	<i>n=213</i>
<b>George W. Bush</b>		
One week after address	52	171
All others	0	189
<i>Totals</i>	<i>n=52</i>	<i>n=360</i>

The coding scheme and instructions for the editorials (See Appendix D) were identical to the coding scheme and instructions for the addresses, with a few exceptions and additions. The editorial, rather than paragraphs within editorials, served as the unit of data collection, for two reasons: (1) editorials tend to be short, often no more than three or four paragraphs; and (2) editorials often focus on singular issues with only a few guiding arguments. Detailed below are variables that were modified or added to the coding scheme for the editorials:

a) Articulation of principles/values: A valence code was included in these categories to record the nature of the association of the theme with the United States. If there was a negative association (e.g. "The U.S. does not live up to [the value/principle]" or "this [value/principle] is bad"), the valence was coded as a "1." If there was a mix of

positive and negative associations between the value and America, then the valence was coded as a “2.” If the associations were all positive, (e.g. the U.S. was described as upholding or embodying the value/principle) the valence was coded as a “3.” Notably, I did not code for valence of associations in the president’s discourse for these variables because the president never discussed these principles or values in a negative manner.

b) National character dimensions: A valence code was also added for each of these six categories to code for whether the editorial described the nation as living up to the identified qualities of heroism, patriotism, and so on. As with the values and principles, I did not code for valence of associations in the president’s discourse for these variables because the president never discussed these qualities in a negative manner.

c) Collective language: this category was added to capture usage of words designed to identify Americans as part of an in-group, such as “we,” “us” and “our.” I assigned a 1 if such language was present in the editorial and 0 if not.

d) Evaluations of the president, positive and negative: these categories captured language that discussed presidential performance, character, leadership, and ability. For example, an editorial that said “President George W. Bush has risen to the challenge of guiding this nation through one of the most difficult moments in its history” would be coded as a positive evaluation of the president. An editorial that said, “The president has demonstrated little understanding of Middle East politics, and his actions threaten to raise tensions there, not ease them” would be coded as a negative evaluation of the president. Having two separate categories allowed coding for both positive and negative evaluations of the president within the same editorial.

*Inter-coder reliability checks*

A second coder coded a total of 119 paragraphs over three presidential speeches for an overlap of 15% of paragraphs. Inter-coder reliabilities, for the most part, were .80 or higher, but a few variables had lower reliability scores, highlighting the difficulty and complexity of the coding scheme. These variables were articulation of a threat (64 percent agreement), justice/fairness (65 percent), articulation of U.S. resolve (60 percent) and noble/righteous goals (74 percent). While these numbers are cause for concern and indicate a need for some revisions in the coding scheme, I retain confidence in my findings for an important reason: in comparing my data with that of my second coder, it became clear that I used a much more conservative coding approach. In other words, most of the disagreements arose when my second coder coded these variables as “present” when I coded them as “not present.” Any disagreements are a problem, of course, but I am far more comfortable with the knowledge that I did not “over-code” or read too much into these speeches in looking for themes that weren’t truly present.

I did not obtain inter-coder data for editorials due to the time burden it would have placed on my second coder. I suspect, however, that reliabilities would have been comparable to presidential speeches because the coding scheme was, in large part, similar. I am fully aware that this lack of inter-coder reliability is a significant weakness.

## Chapter IV: Results

My results are presented in three stages. First, I examine the presence of national identity themes in presidential addresses – specifically, the types of themes present, their frequency of use, and how they change over time. Additionally, I briefly touch on differences between the two presidents in their use of national identity themes. Second, I perform similar analyses of national identity themes in editorials from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and briefly examine differences between newspapers. Finally, I examine potential linkages between the presence of these themes in presidential addresses and their appearance in subsequent editorials.

### *Hypothesis 1*

Hypothesis 1 posits that presidential addresses *after* the beginning of each crisis (deployment of U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf on 8/8/90, and the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01) will contain more national identity-affirming themes than presidential addresses before these dates. To test this hypothesis, I ran crosstabs between time period (peacetime or crisis) and the presence of each of the national identity themes for each president's addresses (by paragraph).

For ease of presentation, I will discuss each president separately, starting with President George H.W. Bush. In all, I coded a total of 138 paragraphs in three peacetime addresses and 251 paragraphs in a total of 12 Persian Gulf crisis-related addresses. Results in Table 2 indicate support for Hypothesis 1 across some of the variables. In the top section of the table are seven of 24 total *nation-affirming* themes that appear more often in the president's crisis addresses than in his peacetime addresses (significantly

different at  $p < .05$ ). These are: articulation of an enemy, articulation of a threat, articulation of U.S. strength/efficacy, noble/righteous goals, world leadership, mention of world support, and articulation of U.S. resolve/determination. In addition, two *nation-challenging* themes are included in the top section – articulation of U.S. weakness and articulation of U.S. divisiveness. These themes are included at this place in the table because they appear *less frequently* during the crisis period and thus support Hypothesis 1.

In Table 2 we see that establishing and demonizing the enemy was one of the centerpieces of George H.W. Bush's communication strategy once the crisis began. Fully half the paragraphs in his crisis addresses made some reference to Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi regime. Bush frequently used words and phrases such as "brutal," "ruthless," "blitzkrieg," "tyranny," "inhumane aggression," "unspeakable atrocities," "affront to mankind," and "rape of Kuwait" to describe the Iraqi leader, his military forces, and their actions in Kuwait. It is interesting that the president's first crisis address on August 8, 1990, contained few of these more visceral descriptions; the most frequent such language was "Iraqi aggression." By the time Bush made his next major address to the nation on September 11, 1990, however, his characterization of the Iraqi leader and his government had sharpened considerably. Also notable is the fact that the president used the word "evil" only twice to describe the Iraqis in these addresses.

Table 2  
Presence of National Identity Themes by Time Frame for George H. W. Bush

	Peacetime ( <i>n</i> = 138)	Crisis ( <i>n</i> = 251)	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i> <
Articulation of an enemy	2.2%	49.4%	90.32	.001
Articulation of a threat	2.2%	25.9%	34.74	.001
Articulation of U.S. strength	47.1%	68.5%	17.17	.001
Noble/righteous goals	15.2%	31.9%	12.85	.001
World leadership	3.6%	18.3%	16.90	.001
Mention of world support	4.3%	28.7%	32.90	.001
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	20.3%	11.2%	6.03	.02
Resolve/determination	9.4%	17.5%	4.68	.03
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	4.3%	1.2%	3.92	.05
Justice/fairness	8.0%	12.0%		n.s.
Heroism/courage	8.7%	10.0%		n.s.
Patriotism/pride/dignity	5.1%	7.2%		n.s.
Peacefulness/compassion	27.5%	28.7%		n.s.
U.S. values (in general)	6.5%	4.8%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. unity	15.9%	14.3%		n.s.
Positive historical references	11.6%	8.0%		n.s.
Negative historical references*	2.9%	2.8%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
Progress/innovation	30.4%	10.4%	24.88	.001
Pluralism/tolerance	5.1%	0.8%	7.20	.01
Capitalism/economic values	14.5%	6.8%	6.17	.02
Individualism	5.8%	2.0%	3.99	.05
Religious language	9.4%	4.8%	3.19	.07
Democracy/freedom	23.9%	16.7%	2.95	.08

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*

Articulation of threats to the United States and its interests also showed a significant increase in Bush's crisis speeches. While his peacetime addresses rarely discussed threats, particularly as the Cold War was ending and old adversaries were becoming new friends, Bush's crisis addresses regularly discussed the threat that the Iraqis posed to U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf, to U.S. troops that were sent to defend Saudi Arabia, and in a more general sense, the threat that Iraq posed to the "New World Order" that the president sought to build.

Table 2 also shows that articulation of U.S. strength and efficacy was an important part of the president's discourse in both peacetime and crisis periods; however this theme became more salient during the crisis period as the United States deployed its military forces – symbols of the nation's might — and the president sought to assure the American public that the nation had the power and the ability to enforce its will and accomplish its objectives. In a similar vein, President Bush was more willing to acknowledge U.S. weaknesses during his peacetime speeches, primarily in the context of social and domestic problems that the nation was failing to resolve, such as drugs, crime, education and health care. During the crisis speeches, however, discussion of U.S. weaknesses diminished significantly, and the few references continued to focus on domestic issues, not on the crisis itself.

Emphasis upon U.S. actions as pursuing noble goals and highlighting of the nation's role as a world leader also permeated Bush's crisis addresses. The president often spoke of America pursuing a "New World Order" and framed Iraq's actions as a threat to the fabric of this new world order. Further, Bush frequently stressed America's

central role in assembling a coalition of nations to oppose the Iraqis, as well as the nation's unique responsibility in doing the "hard work of freedom" because the "hopes of humanity" depended on it.

President Bush was also much more likely to describe the world as being united with and supporting America in the crisis period. Nearly 29% of crisis paragraphs cited "the world" or "our coalition partners" as working with the United States or united with America. In addition, there were frequent references to individual nations, particularly Arab nations that supported the effort to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. The purpose of these frequent references was to add legitimacy to the U.S. policies and convey that it was not just acting in its own interests.

President Bush's crisis addresses also regularly contained language that described the nation as determined and resolute. This theme seemed designed to assure the American public that the country had the resolve and fortitude to see the crisis through to the end, even if it meant possible U.S. casualties. Further, use of this theme probably helped President Bush enhance his own image as a tough leader, an image he was likely anxious to improve after being described by some journalists and pundits as a "wimp" during his candidacy for president.

Finally, while the president did not acknowledge divisions in U.S. public sentiment often in either time period, he did so significantly less during the crisis period, suggesting that it was important to push aside differences and create a feeling of national togetherness during this period in order to generate and maintain support for U.S. actions.



While the themes discussed above were in line with Hypothesis 1, the bottom of Table 2 shows that six nation-affirming themes appeared more often during President Bush's *peacetime* speeches. The differences between two time periods for these variables are mostly modest with the exception of progress/innovation. A full 30% of paragraphs in Bush's peacetime addresses invoked this theme, while only 10% did so during the crisis. It is clear that progress was one of the themes underlying Bush's peacetime discourse. Domestically, he frequently spoke of "building a better future" through technological innovation, improved education, and a new commitment to the nation's "common mission of progress." Internationally, President Bush saw the United States as responsible for ending the Cold War and moving the world forward into a new era of international cooperation. This international focus on progress remained somewhat in Bush's crisis addresses as he talked about his New World Order, but what was missing, understandably, was the focus on "domestic progress."

Surprisingly, themes of U.S. democracy and freedom were more prevalent in the peacetime speeches. I attribute this to two factors: first, as mentioned previously, the president often spoke in peacetime about the U.S. role in bringing democracy and freedom to former Soviet-bloc countries at the end of the Cold War. Second, during his crisis speeches, the theme of freedom remained salient as the president talked of "liberating" the Kuwaitis but democracy lost salience, primarily because the United States was coming to the aid of two countries – Saudi Arabia and Kuwait – that, while U.S. allies, were not democratic. Nonetheless, U.S. democracy and freedom were an

important part of the president's communications in both periods, a strategy designed to reinforce the exceptionalism of American democracy and individual freedoms.

For the remaining nine themes in the middle section, there were no statistically significant differences in usage between peacetime and crisis. One point is worth mentioning: Notice the consistency and prevalence of peacefulness/compassion. In both time frames, the president consistently described Americans as compassionate and the nation as striving for and promoting peace around the world. These ideas remained consistent during the crisis, as Bush spoke of making every effort to resolve the Gulf crisis peacefully and stressed America's reluctance to go to war.

I turn next to President George W. Bush in comparing the presence of national identity themes across peacetime and crisis addresses. In all, I coded a total of 119 paragraphs in two peacetime addresses and 281 paragraphs in a total of nine "war on terrorism" addresses. Data in the top section of Table 3 demonstrate support for Hypothesis 1 across 10 themes.

Table 3  
Presence of National Identity Themes by Time Frame for George W. Bush

	Peacetime (n = 119)	Crisis (n = 281)	X <sup>2</sup>	p<
Articulation of an enemy	1.7%	50.9%	87.60	.001
Articulation of a threat	2.5%	38.8%	54.55	.001
Resolve/determination	3.4%	27.8%	30.53	.001
Mention of world support	5.0%	17.1%	10.37	.001
Articulation of U.S. unity	16.8%	29.9%	7.44	.01
Noble righteous goals	7.6%	19.6%	8.97	.01
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	2.5%	0.0%	7.14	.01
Patriotism/pride/dignity	3.4%	10.3%	5.35	.03
Articulation of U.S. strength	58.8%	69.8%	4.48	.04
World leadership	3.4%	9.3%	4.18	.05
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	25.2%	27.0%		n.s.
Democracy/freedom	14.3%	16.0%		n.s.
Pluralism/tolerance	5.9%	6.4%		n.s.
Progress/innovation	9.2%	6.0%		n.s.
Capitalism/economic values	7.6%	5.3%		n.s.
Individualism	6.7%	3.6%		n.s.
U.S. values (in general)	10.1%	6.4%		n.s.
Religious language	10.1%	13.9%		n.s.
Heroism/courage	10.1%	12.5%		n.s.
Peacefulness/compassion	26.9%	29.2%		n.s.
Positive historical references	6.7%	3.2%		n.s.
Negative historical references*	1.7%	1.8%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
Justice/fairness	16.8%	8.5%	5.83	.02

All crosstabs have 1 d.f.

\* Nation-challenging theme

Like his father during the Gulf War, George W. Bush invoked “the enemy” in half of his crisis address paragraphs. Further, the construction of the enemy was stronger in language. The president used terms and phrases such as “evil,” “wicked,” “enemies of freedom,” “the worst of human nature,” and “mass murderers” in talking about “the enemy.” In fact, he used the word “evil” 20 times over the nine crisis addresses to describe the terrorists and their supporters. As if to underscore the depravity of the enemy, Bush described the terrorists as “the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century,” including “fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism.” These comparisons seemed designed to activate familiar conceptions of past U.S. adversaries, particularly World War II enemies. At the same time, these comparisons contained implicit assurances that America would prevail, just as it had in World War II.

As was the case in the Gulf War, the president not only described the nature of the enemy, but repeatedly — about once every three paragraphs — articulated the threats they posed to the nation. In the case of the September 11 attacks, the enemy did not just pose a threat to U.S. interests or U.S. allies. President Bush described the threat in larger terms, saying, “The terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life.” Further, many of the president’s post-September 11 addresses were devoted to specific discussion of these threats and assurance that the nation was prepared to meet them. This overall discourse of threat and security had major consequences for the post-September 11 political climate, a point to which I’ll return in the discussion.

As in the Gulf War crisis, articulation of U.S. resolve became a more prominent theme in presidential speeches, appearing in nearly 28% of crisis paragraphs. From the

beginning, Bush sought to assure the nation that it would prevail, saying, "These attacks shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve." This theme assumed added importance, given the president's frequent reiteration that the conflict would be long and difficult. No doubt, President Bush saw it as necessary to stress the steadfastness of the nation, given that the stated goal of the war on terrorism was the destruction of the "global terror network," an open-ended and potentially ambiguous objective.

Describing the world as being united with the United States took on new prominence after the September 11 attacks. Bush took great pains to remind the nation and the world that citizens of many nations had been killed in the attacks and that the fight to come was not just America's responsibility, but the world's. Likewise, references to U.S. unity nearly doubled during the crisis period, as the president described the nation as joined together in a "kinship of grief" and united in "steadfast resolve to prevail against our enemies."

In his crisis addresses, President Bush also often spoke of the United States being engaged in a noble cause for the sake of the world. He often framed the "war on terrorism" in grand terms, invoking good and evil frequently and characterizing the conflict as the "struggle of humanity against tyranny." In his September 20 address to the nation, he said, "In our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time -- now depends on us." Bush's frequent emphasis on America's role in a noble endeavor was his constant reminder to the nation

that he believed the fate of humanity depended on America. Indeed, he stated as much on November 9: "We wage a war to save civilization, itself. We did not seek it, but we must fight it -- and we will prevail." These statements also reflect President Bush's articulation of America as a world leader, a theme that rose three-fold from peacetime to crisis. His conviction that America could lead the world out of danger was evident when he said, "As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world."

Table 3 also shows that President Bush was significantly less likely to mention or acknowledge instances of divisiveness among the population during the crisis. In fact, he *never* described the nation or Americans as divided after the September 11 attacks, suggesting that maintaining national unity was a paramount goal for the administration. Notably though, he rarely acknowledged divisiveness in his peacetime speeches.

Not surprisingly, articulation of U.S. patriotism increased from peacetime to crisis. President Bush spoke pointedly after the September 11 attacks of "American flags, which are displayed in pride, and wave in defiance." He talked frequently of the ways in which ordinary Americans were expressing a newfound sense of patriotism.

Similarly, articulation of U.S. strength and efficacy increased from 59% in peacetime speech paragraphs to 70% in the crisis speeches. While the increase was predicted, the pervasiveness of this theme throughout *all* of President Bush's addresses is striking, as he consistently affirmed notions of American power and strength and assured Americans of the nation's ability to overcome any obstacle and solve any problem. In his crisis addresses, Bush particularly affirmed U.S. strength in his frequent predictions of

how the conflict would end. In his September 20 address, he said, as he often would, “The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain.... Fellow citizens, we’ll meet violence with patient justice -- assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come.”

In contrast to these ten themes supportive of the hypothesis, only one nation-affirming theme — justice/fairness — appeared more often in Bush’s peacetime addresses. The drop in this theme once the crisis began is likely due to the fact that the attacks were framed as acts of war in addition to crimes. Consequently, the U.S. response was framed as a “war on terrorism” and the language of war tended to overshadow the language of justice. While there were some references to “bringing our enemies to justice,” President Bush placed more emphasis on “bringing justice to our enemies,” a not-so-subtle distinction that implied American firepower would ultimately play a larger role than traditional criminal courts.

Several points are worth mentioning about the themes that showed no significant changes between peacetime and crisis. First, articulation of U.S. weakness showed almost no change between time periods. Like his father, George W. Bush most frequently acknowledged U.S. weaknesses in terms of domestic and social problems during his peacetime speeches, not in terms of the nation’s military might or relations with other countries. However, after the September 11 attacks, discussion of U.S. weakness did not diminish as expected because the president was forced to acknowledge that the nation had been hit hard by the attacks and that vulnerabilities existed in the nation’s security apparatus.

Second, note the consistent emphasis upon Americans as peaceful and compassionate, a phenomenon that we saw with the previous President Bush. These descriptions thus may be a constant thread that dominates presidential characterizations of the nation, no matter what the circumstances.

Finally, it is worth noting the relative importance of the themes of democracy and freedom in both time periods. In his inaugural, President Bush said that through the twentieth century, “America’s faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea” and that it had become like “a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations.” Likewise, as he sought to explain to the nation why it had been attacked on September 11, he framed his explanation in terms of these very values: “They [the terrorists] hate what we see right here in this chamber — a democratically elected government... They hate our freedoms — our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”

Across Tables 2 and 3, the two presidents have a number of themes in common that appear more frequently in their crisis speeches, specifically articulation of an enemy, articulation of a threat, articulation of U.S. strength, discussion of noble/righteous goals, discussion of the U.S. world leadership role, mention of world support, and articulation of U.S. resolve/determination. These commonalities suggest these themes play important roles in presidential crisis rhetoric. These themes are particularly focused on the international aspects of the crisis – who the enemy is, what threats they pose, and how the nation is defined in terms of both the enemy and the crisis itself.



As an additional way of examining the differences between peacetime and crisis speeches, I constructed an additional variable, a *National Identity Mean* (NIM). This variable represents an aggregate of all the national identity themes in each paragraph; in essence, it is a *net* average of national identity themes per paragraph. For each paragraph, I constructed the variable by assigning a “1” to each of the 20 *affirming* themes if they were present and a “-1” to the four *nation-challenging* themes (articulation of U.S. weakness, articulation of U.S. divisiveness, mention of world opposition, and negative U.S. historical references) if they were present. I then summed these for each paragraph. After calculating the NIM for each paragraph, I then calculated the mean for each address. Thus, the NIM for each address represents the net average per paragraph of affirming themes minus negative themes. This analysis offers insight into the consistency of national identity discourse across the presidents over time.

Once again I first present results for George H.W. Bush. Figure 1 shows the NIM plotted for his 15 analyzed addresses. The contrast between the NIM of the peacetime speeches (1-3) compared with the crisis speeches (4-15) is immediately apparent. President Bush’s peacetime addresses range from a high NIM of 2.77 in his inaugural address to a low of 2.17 in his 1990 State of the Union. In contrast, the NIM of his crisis addresses ranges from a high of 4.4 in the opening statement of his November 8, 1990, press conference on the Persian Gulf crisis to a low of 2.67 in the opening statement of his December 18, 1990, press conference. In other words, the *lowest* crisis NIM is roughly parallel to the *highest* peacetime NIM. Finally, I compared the NIMs for all

peacetime addresses and all crisis addresses. The mean for peacetime speeches was 2.29 while the mean for crisis speeches was 3.51 ( $t = 5.61, p < .001$ ).

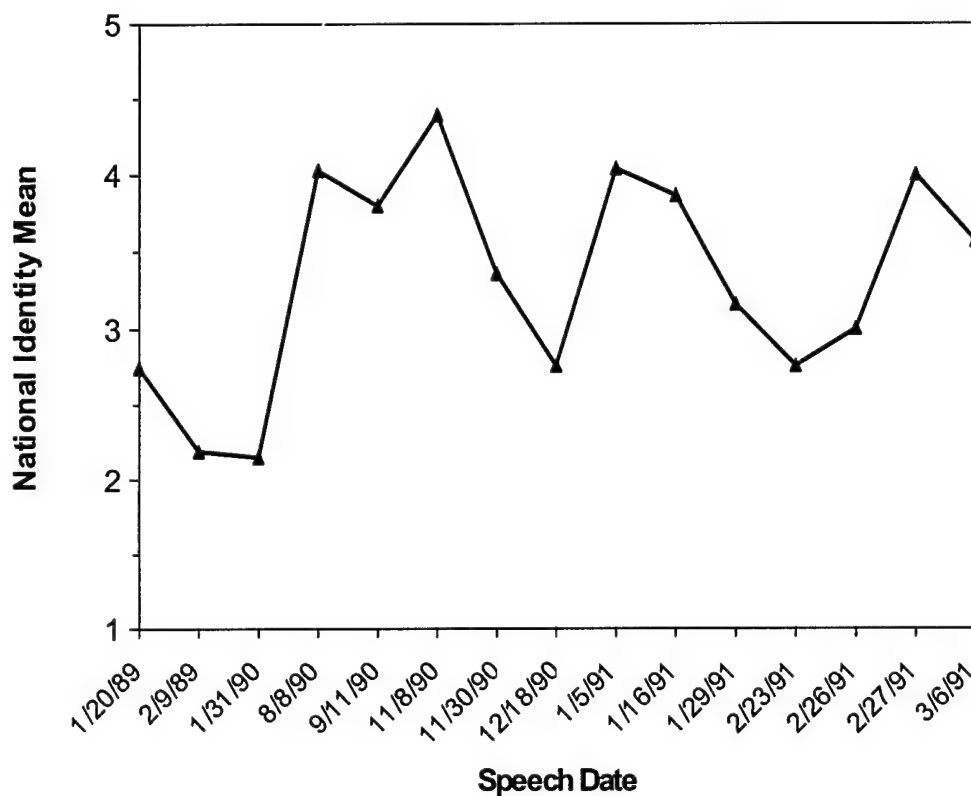


Figure 1  
George H.W. Bush National Identity Mean Plotted by Address

Next I turn to the over-time NIMs for George W. Bush. In Figure 2, we see a pattern similar to George H.W. Bush's speeches in Figure 1. The NIMs for George W. Bush's peacetime addresses had a high of 2.65 in his inaugural and a low of 1.47 in his address to Congress a month later. Conversely, his addresses after the terrorist attacks

range from a NIM high of 4.57 in his November 8, 2001, address to the nation to a low of 3.00 in his remarks on September 14, 2001, at the National Cathedral. This time, the lowest mean in the crisis period still exceeds the highest peacetime mean. Notably, with the exception of the November 8 speech when the NIM increased to 4.57, George W. Bush was remarkably consistent in his use of national identity language during the crisis, with means ranging from 3.00 to 3.67. Once again, I compared NIMs for all peacetime speeches and all crisis speeches. The overall mean for peacetime speeches was 1.97 while the overall mean for crisis speeches was 3.55 ( $t = 7.02, p < .001$ ).

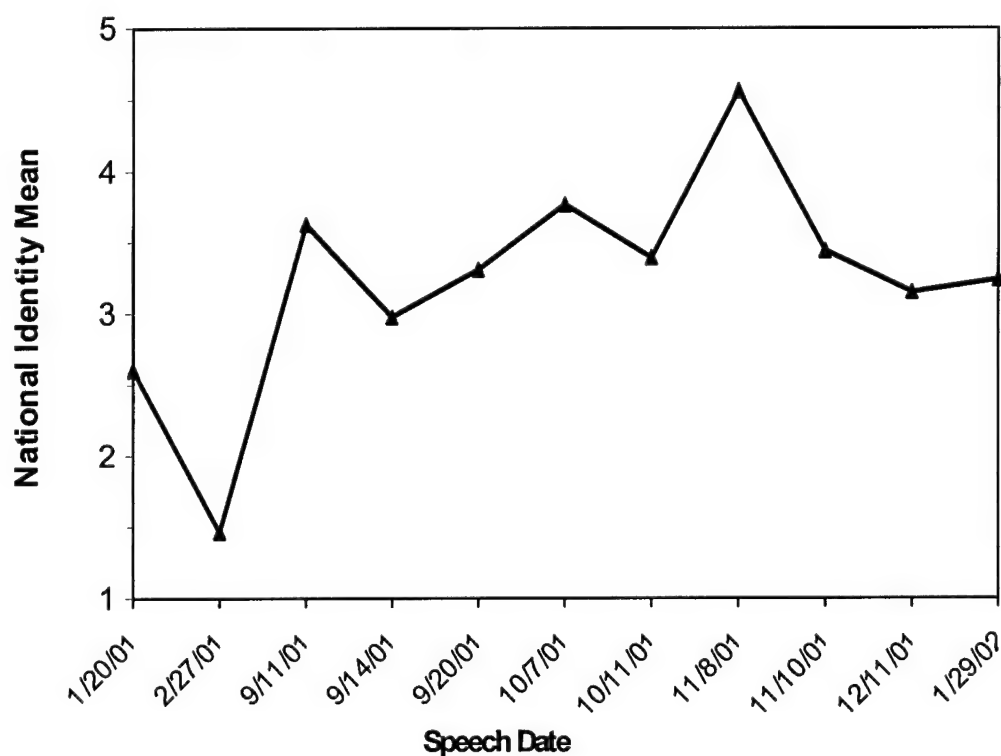


Figure 2  
George W. Bush National Identity Mean Plotted By Speech

In sum, the data in Tables 2 and 3 present a nuanced picture of how presidential articulation of national identity changes between peacetime and crisis periods, while Figures 1 and 2 provide longitudinal snapshots of national identity discourse by the presidents. From this data, we obtain a clearer and more detailed picture of how two presidents constructed and articulated U.S. national identity in “normal” times and what aspects of national identity became more or less important during their respective crises. Overall, the data offer moderate support for Hypothesis 1 with some, though not all, of the themes becoming more relevant and more salient during crisis situations.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

Hypothesis two states that presidential addresses during the crisis periods will contain more national identity-affirming themes in the period *leading up to the initiation of military action* than the period *following initiation of military action*. This hypothesis is predicated on the perspective that the period preceding military action may be more important for mobilizing the nation, and thus would contain more national identity discourse designed to rally the public and enhance national esteem. In order to test this hypothesis, I examined only addresses within the *crisis* timeframes. Specifically, in these time windows I compared (a) national identity discourse in addresses preceding military action with (b) national identity discourse in addresses after initiation of military action.

Once again I begin with President George H.W. Bush. The *pre-military* action period (from 8/8/90 to 1/15/91) contained six speeches, as did the *during-military* action sample (from 1/16/91 to 3/6/91). Results from these Gulf War crisis addresses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4  
Presence of National Identity Themes Within-Crisis for George H.W. Bush

	<i>Pre-Military Action (n = 96)</i>	<i>During-Military Action (n = 155)</i>	<i>X<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>p &lt;</i>
Articulation of an enemy	63.5%	49.4%	12.43	.001
Articulation of a threat	38.5%	18.1%	12.95	.001
Resolve/determination	30.2%	9.7%	17.29	.001
World leadership	29.2%	11.6%	12.20	.001
Mention of world support	36.5%	23.9%	4.59	.04
Capitalism/economic values	7.3%	6.5%		n.s.
U.S. values (in general)	6.2%	3.9%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	1.0%	1.3%		n.s.
Pluralism/tolerance	0.0%	1.3%		n.s.
Justice/fairness	10.4%	12.9%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	10.4%	11.6%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. strength	62.5%	72.3%		n.s.
Religious language	2.1%	6.5%		n.s.
Heroism/courage	8.3%	11.0%		n.s.
Patriotism/pride/dignity	5.2%	8.4%		n.s.
Peacefulness/compassion	24.0%	31.6%		n.s.
Noble/righteous goals	28.1%	34.2%		n.s.
Positive historical references	7.3%	8.4%		n.s.
Negative historical references*	3.1%	2.6%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
Democracy/freedom	7.3%	22.6%	9.95	.01
Articulation of U.S. unity	8.3%	18.1%	4.57	.04
Individualism	0.0%	3.2%	3.16	.08
Progress/innovation	6.2%	12.9%	2.83	.09

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*

The results in Table 4 do not provide much support for Hypothesis 2. The vast majority of themes (in the middle section of the table) show no significant change between the mobilization (pre-military action) period and the military action period. In the top section of the table we find only five themes that are more prevalent in the pre-military action period. Notably, it appears that President Bush relied heavily on two of these — articulation of an enemy and articulation of a threat — to build his case to Congress and the American people for taking military action. Repeated descriptions of the enemy as brutal and as posing a significant threat were offered to generate congressional and public support for military action.

Additionally, two themes that focus on America's international influence — world leadership and mention of world support — were also more prominent during the pre-war speeches as President Bush assembled a broad coalition and repeatedly described the conflict as "the world's fight." In an argument that he would make often during this period, the president said, "This is not, as Saddam Hussein would have it, the United States against Iraq. It is Iraq against the world."

While the top section of Table 4 contains a handful of themes that support Hypothesis 2, the bottom section of the table shows an almost equal number of themes (democracy/freedom, articulation of U.S. unity, individualism, progress/innovation) that run counter to the hypothesis — that is, these themes appeared more frequently *after* the initiation of military action. The increase in references to democracy and freedom can be tied to two factors: first, the president's State of the Union address occurred during the war and contained numerous references to the spread of democracy and freedom in

former Soviet bloc countries, references independent of the crisis but coded nonetheless. Second, the president spoke more often in the war timeframe of “freeing” the Kuwaiti people, an idea that became even more prominent once coalition troops had driven the Iraqi army out of the country.

Also interesting is President Bush’s articulation of U.S. unity over the two time periods. Well aware that public opinion was initially heavily divided over the issue of using force to expel the Iraqi military from Kuwait, the president did not claim American unity regarding potential military action in the Gulf. Once the military campaign began, however, public support for the war grew quickly, a fact that President Bush seized upon in his subsequent wartime speeches.

Further, independent samples t-tests comparing the NIMs for the *pre*-military action speeches (3.67) to the *during*-military action speeches (3.42) revealed no significant differences ( $t = .91$ , n.s.). In sum, I found little support for Hypothesis 2 in George H.W. Bush’s crisis addresses.

Turning to George W. Bush’s crisis speeches, his *pre*-military action addresses (from 9/11/01 to 9/20/01) consisted of three speeches, while his *during*-military action addresses (from 10/7/01 to 1/29/02) consisted of six speeches. Looking at data in Table 5, I again find little support for Hypothesis 2.

Table 5  
Presence of National Identity Themes Within-Crisis for George W. Bush

	Pre-Military Action (n = 87)	During-Military Action (n = 194)	$X^2$	$p <$
Religious language	23.0%	9.8%	8.75	.01
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	34.5%	23.7%	3.53	.06
Articulation of U.S. unity	36.8%	26.8%	2.85	.09
Democracy/freedom	17.2%	15.5%		n.s.
Positive historical references	4.6%	2.6%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
U.S. values (in general)	4.6%	7.2%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
Pluralism/tolerance	4.6%	7.2%		n.s.
Justice/fairness	6.9%	9.3%		n.s.
Articulation of a threat	35.6%	40.2%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. strength	65.5%	71.6%		n.s.
Articulation of an enemy	49.4%	51.5%		n.s.
Heroism/courage	11.5%	12.9%		n.s.
Patriotism/pride/dignity	6.9%	11.9%		n.s.
Peacefulness/compassion	28.7%	31.6%		n.s.
Noble/righteous goals	18.4%	20.1%		n.s.
Capitalism/economic values	3.4%	6.2%		n.s.
Negative historical references*	3.4%	1.0%		n.s.
Progress/innovation	4.6%	6.7%		n.s.
World leadership	6.9%	10.3%		n.s.
Resolve/determination	25.3%	28.9%		n.s.
Mention of world support	8.0%	21.1%	7.26	.01
Individualism	0.0%	5.2%	4.65	.04

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*



Once again, the vast majority of themes show no significant changes in frequency between the *pre*-military action and *during*-military action time frames. Three themes appeared significantly more often in the *pre*-military action time frame, while two themes appeared more frequently in the latter period. This overall lack of variation suggests that George W. Bush was strikingly consistent in his articulation of U.S. national identity after the September 11 attacks, at least in the period of analysis here. Further, the president repeatedly told the nation that military action would be only one of many tools to be used by America in the war on terrorism, in effect downplaying the significance of the military campaign.

Notably, religious language and articulation of U.S. unity did appear more often in the speeches immediately after the attacks and before the beginning of the military campaign in Afghanistan. These results are not surprising, given the nature of the attacks and the president's desire to unite the country. Additionally, the president's second speech during a September 14 memorial service at Washington's National Cathedral accounted for a significant portion of the religious language in this time period. Finally, Bush's acknowledgement of U.S. weaknesses in the *pre*-military action timeframe is hardly unexpected, given the recency of the attacks during those first three speeches. It makes sense that as time passed, the president would focus less on the attacks and the vulnerabilities they exposed and more on U.S. actions to be taken to punish those responsible. Additionally, analysis of NIMs for both periods shows no significant differences, with a *pre*-military action NIM of 3.24 compared to a *during*-military action NIM of 3.70 ( $t = 1.65$ , n.s.).

Hypothesis 2, then, is unsupported. Data in Tables 4 and 5 show that articulation of national identity remained consistent over the entire crisis for both presidents, despite the differing circumstances of the crises. This finding appears to negate the importance of the beginning of military action as a turning point in presidential construction and articulation of national identity, at least in the context of these two crises.

### ***Research Question 1***

My research question asks whether there are any significant differences *between the presidents* in the presence of national identity themes in their speeches. In this case, I am only concerned with crisis speeches. To answer this question, I ran crosstabs between national identity theme and president for all of the crisis addresses. Results in Table 6 show that there were significant differences between the two presidents for half of the national identity themes.

Table 6  
National Identity Themes During Crisis by President

	George H.W. Bush ( <i>n</i> = 251)	George W. Bush ( <i>n</i> = 281)	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i> <
Noble/righteous goals	31.9%	19.6%	10.59	.001
Mention of world support	28.7%	17.1%	10.22	.001
World leadership	18.3%	9.3%	9.33	.01
Positive historical references	8.0%	3.2%	5.84	.02
Progress/innovation	10.4%	6.0%	3.31	.07
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	1.2%	0.0%	3.38	.07
Justice/fairness	12.0%	8.5%		n.s.
Democracy/freedom	16.7%	16.0%		n.s.
Capitalism/economic values	6.8%	5.3%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. strength	68.5%	69.8%		n.s.
Articulation of an enemy	49.4%	50.9%		n.s.
Individualism	2.0%	3.6%		n.s.
U.S. values (in general)	4.8%	6.4%		n.s.
Heroism/courage	10.0%	12.5%		n.s.
Patriotism/pride/dignity	7.2%	10.3%		n.s.
Peacefulness/compassion	28.7%	29.2%		n.s.
Negative historical references*	2.8%	1.8%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.0%		n.s.
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	11.2%	27.0%	21.29	.001
Articulation of U.S. unity	14.3%	29.9%	18.35	.001
Religious language	4.8%	13.9%	12.66	.001
Pluralism	0.8%	6.4%	11.53	.001
Articulation of a threat	25.9%	38.8%	10.01	.01
Resolve/determination	17.5%	27.8%	7.85	.01

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*

At the top of Table 6 we see that George H.W. Bush was significantly more likely than his son to employ six themes — noble/righteous goals, mention of world support, world leadership, positive historical references, progress/innovation, and articulation of U.S. divisiveness. Notably, the first theme — articulation of noble/righteous goals — is more prevalent in the Gulf War speeches (32% of paragraphs) than in the “war on terrorism” speeches (20% of paragraphs). While the idea is certainly present in both presidents’ addresses, perhaps George H.W. Bush articulated this theme more frequently because the conflict’s relevance to U.S. interests was not immediately apparent to the American public. In order to mobilize and keep support for U.S. military involvement in the crisis, George H.W. Bush had to emphasize a definition of the crisis that portrayed America as pursuing noble objectives, defending and protecting others, and advancing his desire for a “New World Order.” This finding supports Bloom’s (1990) argument that in the absence of a direct threat to the nation or its interests, leaders will rely on esteem-*enhancing* strategies to rally the nation. Indeed, in the opening of his State of the Union address on January 29, 1991, Bush framed the conflict as a defining moment and argued that by intervening, America was charting the course for the world’s future:

What is at stake is more than one small country; it is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind — peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children’s future.

President George W. Bush’s speeches contained similar themes, but because of the galvanizing nature of the September 11 attacks, he likely had to spend less time and energy “convincing” the public that the nation was engaged in a noble effort.

I argue that similar logic applies for the esteem-*enhancing* themes world leadership and articulation of world support. While these themes were important for both presidents, it again appears that George H.W. Bush probably needed to spend more effort convincing the nation 1) that the United States had a important leadership responsibility in the crisis and 2) that the world was, in fact, united with America in its opposition to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. On September 11, 1990, in a reference to America's role in ending the Cold War, Bush said, "Recent events have surely proven that there is no substitute for American leadership." Further, in his State of the Union address on January 29, 1991, he added, "For two centuries, we've done the hard work of freedom. And tonight, we lead the world in facing down a threat to decency and humanity." Emphasis on these themes was designed to reassure the public and Congress that America was fulfilling its duty to the international community and acting with the support of the world. As President Bush repeatedly argued, this was "the world's fight."

Looking at the bottom section of Table 6, we see George W. Bush was significantly more likely than his father to employ six themes — articulation of U.S. weakness, articulation of U.S. unity, religious language, pluralism, articulation of a threat, and resolve/determination. None of these differences is surprising, given the nature of the September 11 attacks. First, George W. Bush had more reasons to acknowledge U.S. weaknesses during the September 11 crisis than his father did during the Persian Gulf crisis. Similarly, the "war on terrorism" presented a range of new threats to the nation that were absent during the Persian Gulf crisis.

Second, George W. Bush more frequently articulated his vision of America as a united nation. In his September 14 speech at the National Cathedral, he set the tone for what would become a recurring theme: "Today, we feel what Franklin Roosevelt called the warm courage of national unity. This is a unity of every faith, and every background." Conversely, his father did not have the benefit of a united nation until well after the beginning of the military campaign against Iraq.

George W. Bush was also more likely to use religious language during his crisis addresses than his father. Admittedly, part of this difference was due to the religious setting of his second speech at the National Cathedral, but the differences extend beyond simply the frequency of religious references. The majority of religious references by the first President Bush focused on asking the nation to pray for U.S. troops and the usual "God Bless America" at the end of addresses. In contrast, George W. Bush often used religious themes to assure the nation that its cause was just and that it would prevail. For instance in his September 20 address to the nation, he said, "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them." Further, George W. Bush frequently used religious themes to criticize the al-Qaeda terrorists and the Taliban, often accusing them of "perverting Islam." For example, on November 10 in his address to the United Nations, he said, "They [the terrorists] dare to ask God's blessing as they set out to kill innocent men, women and children. But the God of Isaac and Ishmael would never answer such a prayer."

Pluralism was also significantly more prominent in George W. Bush's crisis speeches. He recognized the potential for backlash against Arabs and Muslims living in

the United States following the September 11 attacks and frequently emphasized the importance of tolerance. On September 20, he said:

I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.

Finally, George W. Bush more frequently articulated U.S. resolve and determination to prevail in the conflict. He repeatedly reminded the nation that the conflict would be long and difficult, and stated emphatically in his September 20 and October 7 speeches, "We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail." Like the use of religious language, the differences in the articulation of resolve between the two presidents were as acute in their levels of *intensity* as they were in their frequency. During the Persian Gulf crisis, George H.W. Bush stressed America's resolve primarily in terms of imposing its will on Iraq and forcing it to leave Kuwait. The resolve expressed by President Bush after the September 11 attacks was framed as determination, not only to defeat a global terrorist network, but to preserve the very freedoms and way of life of the United States.

While some of the differences between the presidents may be due to differences in their rhetorical styles (or the rhetorical styles of their speechwriters), the context and circumstances of the crises seem also to have influenced the prominence of some national identity themes over others. Clearly, George W. Bush faced challenges that were not present during the Persian Gulf crisis, namely that the nation itself had been attacked. I posit that these contextual factors played a major role in influencing the prominence of

the national identity themes that appeared in speeches, as each president sought to “strike the right chords” with the public and mobilize support for national objectives. At the same time, though, analysis of the presidents’ NIMs reveal a remarkable similarity in the *overall level* of national identity themes in their addresses. George H.W. Bush’s speeches had a mean of 3.55 compared to 3.51 for George W. Bush ( $t = .23$ , n.s.), indicating that U.S. national identity remained a consistent rhetorical tool for both presidents despite the contextual differences.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

I now turn to examination of editorials in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. In this analysis, I study the same national identity themes analyzed in presidential addresses, with a few changes and additions. As noted in the method section, the “U.S. values” and “national character” variables now have additional codings for valence. Thus, for these themes I present not only frequencies for their appearances in editorials but also indicate whether the surrounding language (a) *affirmed* U.S. national identity, (b) was both *affirming* and *critical* (i.e., mixed), or (c) was solely *critical* of U.S. national identity. In addition, this analysis included a few additional variables not included in the coding of addresses – specifically, positive and negative presidential evaluations and collective language.

Hypothesis 3 states that editorials *after* the beginning of each crisis will exhibit a greater number of national identity themes and more pro-U.S. valence within these themes than editorials before these dates. To examine this hypothesis, I ran crosstabs between time period (peacetime or crisis) and the presence of each of the national identity



themes in editorials in the week following the presidential addresses. For the sake of consistency, I begin with results from editorials during George H.W. Bush's presidency. Because of the large numbers of themes and accompanying valences in some cases, I present results in two stages. Table 7-A presents the results for those themes coded as either present or not present in the editorials. Table 7-B presents results of the valences associated with the seven "U.S. values" and six "national character" variables.

First, the top section of Table 7-A shows that 12 of the nation-affirming themes appear significantly more often in crisis-related editorials than in peacetime editorials. Additionally, there is one nation-challenging theme – articulation of U.S. weakness – that is included in this group because it appears *less* in the crisis editorials and thus supports Hypothesis 3. Not surprisingly, the first two themes – articulation of an enemy and articulation of a threat — show dramatic increases from peacetime to crisis periods. Editorials in the *Times* and *Post* were almost equally as strong as President Bush's addresses in their descriptions of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime; words and phrases such as "ruthless," "lawless," "savage," "barbarous," "shameless," "brutal," "rape of Kuwait," "bloody aggression," and "bloody master of Iraq" painted a clear, negative picture of "the enemy." Likewise, the two papers discussed perceived threats to the United States and its interests in one out of every three editorials. For instance, a *Post* editorial on January 17, 1991, said:

There can be no question of the threat Saddam Hussein has posed to the American interest in an orderly world. Not only did he invade a sovereign state, rape it and remove it from the map.... What made the threat distinctive was the combination of his strategic location, his grandiose ambition and his ruthlessness and hatred of the west, taken together with the wealth and the weaponry to fulfill his purposes.

Table 7-A  
Presence of National Identity Themes in Editorials for George H.W. Bush

	Peacetime (n = 93)	Crisis (n = 91)	X <sup>2</sup>	p<
Articulation of an enemy	3.2%	78.0%	107.02	.001
Articulation of a threat	3.2%	31.9%	26.26	.001
Articulation of U.S. strength	41.9%	78.0%	24.91	.001
Noble/righteous goals	0.0%	16.5%	16.69	.001
World leadership	18.3%	42.9%	13.12	.001
Mention of world support	0.0%	25.3%	26.86	.001
Resolve/determination	3.2%	18.7%	11.34	.001
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	57.0%	34.1%	9.74	.01
Patriotism/pride/dignity	1.1%	12.1%	9.15	.01
Articulation of U.S. unity	3.2%	14.3%	7.09	.01
Heroism/courage	1.1%	8.8%	5.89	.02
Positive presidential evaluations	24.7%	40.7%	5.31	.03
U.S. values (in general)	1.1%	7.7%	4.84	.03
Peacefulness/compassion	21.5%	24.2%		n.s.
Democracy/freedom	16.1%	25.3%		n.s.
Religious language	1.1%	2.2%		n.s.
Mention of world opposition*	1.1%	0.0%		n.s.
Collective language	1.1%	1.1%		n.s.
Individualism	1.1%	0.0%		n.s.
Negative presidential evaluations*	20.4%	13.2%		n.s.
Positive historical references	4.3%	3.3%		n.s.
Progress/innovation	8.6%	3.3%		n.s.
Capitalism/economic values	4.3%	1.1%		n.s.
Justice/fairness	29.0%	7.7%	13.91	.001
Negative historical references*	14.0%	25.3%	3.73	.06
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	2.2%	7.7%	3.04	.09
Pluralism/tolerance	7.5%	1.1%	4.57	.04

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*

Descriptions of U.S. strength and efficacy also rose sharply in the crisis period. The deployment of U.S. military forces to the Persian Gulf region and their subsequent victory over the Iraqi army resulted in clear portrayals of America as a powerful and successful nation in imposing its will and strength to achieve its objectives. Emphasis upon U.S. strength and efficacy became particularly potent once the war began. The *Post* on January 19, 1991, said:

A set of high-tech "smart" weapons often described as gold-plated clinkers worked astonishingly well in those early hours, hinting at giving the American-led coalition mastery of the skies.... A military that supposedly couldn't organize itself respectably against a competent foe was planning and executing an air war so masterfully that, in the first day anyway, Iraq's well-armed and well-trained forces could neither anticipate the attack nor respond effectively to it.

When the war ended, the *Times* wrote glowingly of American prowess on the battlefield:

The skill and coordination of the air war and then of the assaulting armies were as stunning as the speedy outcome... The crushing air assault achieved its objectives of demolishing military targets while holding civilian casualties to a remarkable minimum. (March 1, 1991)

Table 7-A also shows that editorials were *less likely* to discuss U.S. weaknesses or failures in the crisis period. Like the president's speeches, editorials in the peacetime period primarily focused on domestic weaknesses such as drugs, failing schools, and health care woes. In the crisis period, there was a significant decrease in descriptions of the United States as weak or acting ineffectively, but surprisingly one in three editorials still discussed some sort of U.S. weakness or misstep. Many of the editorials in the early part of the crisis made reference to America's over-dependence on foreign oil as well as the nation's faltering economy. In the middle part of the crisis, several editorials were particularly critical of Congress for not quickly supporting all of President Bush's

diplomatic efforts in the United Nations and for failing to fully debate the issue of using U.S. combat troops in an offensive role until just before the war started. The *Post* even accused Congress of "reluctance to accept responsibility for any course of action at all" (January 3, 1991). After the war began, editorial discussion of U.S. weaknesses arose when the nation suffered a setback such as the loss or capture of U.S. pilots, friendly fire incidents, and the deaths of Iraqi civilians during coalition bombing.

Editorials in the *Times* and *Post* appeared to adopt President Bush's description of the U.S. effort as a noble effort and cause; this theme appeared in nearly 17% of editorials during the crisis period, compared with zero peacetime editorials. The *Post* (March 4, 1991) described the war as "the liberation of Kuwait." The *Times*, at the outset of the war (January 17, 1991), said that America was pursuing "honorable goals":

The United States and the United Nations have stated the goals clearly. They are to liberate Kuwait and restore its legitimate rulers, as President Bush said gravely last night; to insure stability in the region; to keep Saddam Hussein from seizing a chokehold on the world's energy lifeline, and to emerge from the crisis in a way that establishes a resolute, decent precedent for guaranteeing collective security in the post-cold-war world.

The *Times* also echoed President Bush in saying that goal was not merely to drive Iraq out of Kuwait, but to establish "a new world order, assuring that collective security, not the law of the jungle, replaces the current pattern of proxy conflicts and thermonuclear deterrence" (January 20, 1991).

Similarly, editorials in the crisis period emphasized America's role as a world leader significantly more than peacetime editorials. The two newspapers stressed America's success in assembling a sizable coalition against Iraq and then leading military

forces from many nations onto the battlefield. Indeed, the headline of a *Times* editorial (August 9, 1990) immediately following President Bush's speech announcing deployment of troops to the Persian Gulf asked, "The U.S. Stands Up. Who Else?" The *Post* credited President Bush with striking

the right balance of American initiative and American deference to create a diplomatic base in the United Nations and then an effective military combination that let the United States bring its military power to bear, even while avoiding the onus of a unilateral intervention (February 25, 1991).

In a similar vein, both papers frequently described strong levels of "world" and "coalition" support for U.S. actions in the crisis, citing the president's success in forging unity with the United Nations, the Soviet Union, and most of the Arab world.

It appears that *Times* and the *Post* also adopted some of the language of the president in describing the United States as resolved and determined to prevail in the conflict, either through diplomatic means or through force. This theme, which was present in only 3% of peacetime editorials, appeared in 19% of crisis editorials. Early in the crisis, the *Post* offered advice to Saddam Hussein: "He would be better advised to acknowledge the unprecedented dimensions of resistance his invasion has invoked and to take the road that Washington and Moscow are suggesting and respect the U.N.'s appeals" (September 10, 1990). The *Times*, on September 13, 1990, said, "If Saddam Hussein thinks the U.S. Congress is about to walk away from the strong American commitment in the Persian Gulf, he should think again, and again." On September 18, the *Post* again stated that "the administration is determined to hold to a principled policy of resistance to aggression and that it is struggling against Saddam Hussein's

intransigence and militancy to keep the crisis from exploding into war.” Later, as the war neared, the *Times* reiterated U.S. determination to force the Iraqis out of Kuwait: “Now that Congress has authorized President Bush to wage war in the Persian Gulf, Saddam Hussein cannot possibly misread America’s message: Get out of Kuwait” (January 13, 1991). When Bush delivered an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait or face a ground attack, the *Times* credited him with having “iron resolve” and praised his dedication to pursuing diplomacy, even as the war continued (February 23, 1991).

Descriptions of Americans as united also appeared significantly more often in crisis editorials than in peacetime editorials. At the same time, editorials alluded to U.S. divisiveness more often in the crisis period (see bottom section of Table 7-A). Essentially, descriptions of U.S. unity and divisiveness rose and fell over three phases: early in the crisis, editorials stressed U.S. unity as the President acted in concert with other nations to put diplomatic and economic pressure on Baghdad to leave Kuwait. Both the *Times* and the *Post* cited the tendency of the nation’s citizens to rally around the president in times of crisis, and described “domestic consensus” and high levels of “domestic support,” even “resounding support,” for President Bush’s decisions in the early part of the crisis. In the second phase, editorials began to cite growing dissent in the public and in Congress as the president took a more aggressive stance and further built up U.S. forces in the Gulf. A December 2, 1990, editorial in the *Times* criticized the administration, saying that “growing numbers of Americans question the president’s haste.” As the nation approached the January 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, the *Times* wrote, “Debate over the wisdom of war is raging everywhere in

America..." (January 3, 1991). In the final phase – the war itself – editorials described Americans as uniting to support the troops, despite their previous sentiment. For instance, the *Post* wrote, "As the nation goes to war, the American people are doubtless as one in their preoccupation with those fighting for them, notwithstanding the political differences that have animated the continuing national debate" (January 17, 1991). The *Times* offered a similar evaluation: "Americans join in supporting their own and other forces that have put their lives on the line against a brutal tyrant" (January 17, 1991).

Table 7-A also shows that editorials were more likely to allude to U.S. patriotic sentiments during the crisis period. Descriptions of U.S. patriotism were particularly prominent at the conclusion of the war. The *Times* wrote on February 28, 1991:

With victory in the Persian Gulf, the nation is already looking forward to a boisterous welcome-home party. If all goes according to expectations, there will be bands, balloons, flags galore and miles of yellow ribbon, testifying that this war, as President Bush so often promised, will not end like Vietnam.

Likewise, editorials during the war also praised the bravery and heroism of American fighting forces. The *Post* on January 23, 1991 cautioned against the so-called "Nintendo metaphor," the tendency of the media and the military to focus on the technology of war and not the people actually fighting. To do so, said the *Post*, would mean failing to "appreciate the enormous danger willingly faced by the troops engaging in these battles, their bravery and their consummate skill." At the end of the war, a *Times* editorial criticized what it saw as a lack of benefits and legal protection for those troops serving in the Gulf, but stated, "For now, let the nation cheer its heroes. For the future, they need more than parades" (March 9, 1991).

Editorials during the Persian Gulf crisis also exhibited a significant increase in positive evaluations of the president, a theme that stayed fairly consistent throughout the crisis. Both newspapers praised the president's ability to assemble and maintain a multinational coalition. They also lauded his leadership and his skills as a crisis manager.

Early in the crisis, as President Bush was solidifying the coalition, the *Times* wrote:

Last week, a tired but tenacious George Bush demonstrated his appetite and aptitude for another role – leader of all countries, Western and Eastern, outraged by Saddam Hussein's naked aggression in Kuwait. Following his lead, the world rose up (August 12, 1990).

Similarly, the *Post* wrote, "Mr. Bush is off to an impressive start in isolating and penalizing Iraq" (August 20, 1990). The *Times* at the end of the war said:

The world that overestimated Saddam Hussein also underestimated George Bush. This page, and others who agreed with the President's goals but thought he was pressing too fast, have to acknowledge that his choices at treacherous junctures proved as successful as they were bold (March 1, 1991).

The *Post* offered similar praise for the President on the same day:

The president himself was at the center of these events from Aug. 2 onward, and his instincts were sound, just as the difficult choices he made were right... The president and his administration did an exceptional job in a very tough and touchy situation (March 1, 1991).

While positive statements about the president increased in this time frame, it is also worth mentioning that negative statements about the president decreased from 20% of editorials in peacetime to 13% during the crisis. While this decrease was not statistically significant, it nonetheless reflected the general trend as the editorial staffs gave much of the credit for the successful war to the president. However, in an omen for his future re-election campaign, the *Times*, on March 5, 1991, noted the "fragility in Mr. Bush's



present standing.” The piece stated that massive public approval for his conduct of the war (91% at the time) was not translating into approval for his domestic policies, particularly the economy.

In the bottom section of Table 7-A, we see that two nation-affirming themes appeared more often in peacetime editorials – justice/fairness, and pluralism — and two nation-challenging themes — articulation of U.S. divisiveness and negative historical references – appeared significantly more often in *crisis* editorials. This last theme – negative historical references — is worth a brief discussion. A large number of these references during the crisis period were to America’s experience in the Vietnam War. Both papers resisted the tendency to directly compare the Gulf War with Vietnam; the *Times* even titled an editorial, “Why the Gulf War is not Vietnam” (February 2, 1991). However, both papers acknowledged that the “ghosts” of Vietnam still lurked in the minds of the nation and often cited the “lessons of Vietnam” in judging U.S. actions in the Gulf War. For instance the *Post* wrote on January 15, 1991:

President Bush has asked for and received the aware consent of most other nations in the world and most members of both house of Congress. These constitute the basic essential standards for American intervention forged in the fires of Vietnam.

After the war began, the *Times* criticized military officials for providing misleading information about the battlefield situation, saying that this was precisely why the public came to oppose the Vietnam War. The *Times* also talked about President Bush’s desire to avoid the “gradualism” that plagued U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, but questioned his readiness to use ground forces against Iraq, asking, “Is the president so

eager to avoid another Vietnam that he's ready to risk another Battle of the Bulge?" (February 10, 1991). What is clear from these editorials is that America's experience in Vietnam was an undercurrent running throughout the conflict -- a reminder of a past national failure that might be exorcised with a successful military campaign in Iraq.

I turn now to look at the results of the valence crosstabs for the U.S. values and national character variables between peacetime and crisis editorials. Specifically, did the editorials portray the U.S. as embodying or upholding these values and qualities, failing to live up to these values or qualities, or somewhere in between? To answer this question, I examined only those editorials that mentioned a particular U.S. value or national character variable and then ran crosstabs between the theme and the associated valence. Results of these valences measures are presented in Table 7-B.

Table 7-B reveals only two statistically significant differences between peacetime and crisis editorials in the valences associated with the seven U.S. values. Further, the number of editorials for these two -- pluralism and U.S. values in general -- are very low, making these comparisons unreliable.

The national character variables in Table 7-B also exhibit only two statistically significant differences between peacetime and crisis editorials -- for peacefulness/compassion and world leadership. In these two cases the numbers of editorials are higher, providing more confidence in the reliability of these comparisons. In the peacetime period, only half of the editorials that made reference to U.S. peacefulness or compassion affirmed this theme, while 40% were mixed and 10% were critical. In this period, descriptions of America's peacefulness and compassion generally focused on the

nation's social problems and its attitude toward disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, minorities, and the poor. Just after President Bush's inauguration, the *Post* praised his plan to bring about a "kinder, gentler nation," but faulted the previous administration for failing "to devote adequate care and respect to disadvantaged groups in American society, including blacks and the poor" (January 22, 1989). In the crisis period, editorials tended to focus more on America as a nation in pursuit of peaceful objectives, namely through *diplomatic* efforts to compel Iraq to leave Kuwait; as a result, 82% of references to this theme during the crisis were affirming and 18% were mixed.

Similarly, editorials in the crisis period were more *affirmative* in their descriptions of the United States as a world leader. While crisis editorials described the United States as an effective world leader 85% of the time, only 47% of peacetime editorials did so while another 47% described America as a somewhat effective world leader but perhaps not fulfilling all its responsibilities. For example, the *Times* was supportive of U.S. efforts to spread democracy in Latin America but expressed reservations about U.S. support for corrupt regimes there, particularly in El Salvador (January 23, 1989). The *Post* also was critical of the United States for not taking a stronger role in providing humanitarian relief for Afghanistan (February 12, 1989). In another editorial, the *Post* described America as a world economic leader, but criticized it for incurring too much foreign debt and for continuing to rely on foreign loans (February 2, 1990).

Table 7-B  
Valence of U.S. Values and National Character Dimensions in Editorials  
for President George H.W. Bush

	Critical	Mixed	Affirming		
<b>Democracy/freedom</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	26.7%	73.3%	100% (n=15)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	8.7%	34.8%	56.5%	100% (n=15)	
<b>Pluralism/tolerance</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	100% (n=7)	$\chi^2=8.00$
<i>Crisis</i>	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100% (n=1)	$p<.02$
<b>Progress/innovation</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%	100% (n=8)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100% (n=3)	
<b>Capitalism/economic values</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100% (n=4)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100% (n=1)	
<b>Individualism</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100% (n=0)	
<b>Justice/fairness</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	100% (n=27)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	28.6%	14.3%	57.1%	100% (n=7)	
<b>U.S. values (in general)</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100% (n=1)	$\chi^2=8.00$ ,
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=7)	$p<.01$
<b>Heroism/courage</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=8)	
<b>Patriotism/pride/dignity</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	9.1%	18.2%	72.7%	100% (n=11)	
<b>Resolve/determination</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=3)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%	100% (n=17)	
<b>Peacefulness/compassion</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%	100% (n=20)	$\chi^2=5.54$ ,
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	18.2%	81.8%	100% (n=22)	$p<.07$
<b>Noble/righteous goals</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	26.7%	73.3%	100% (n=15)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100% (n=0)	
<b>World leadership</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	5.9%	47.1%	47.1%	100% (n=17)	$\chi^2=9.33$ ,
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	100% (n=39)	$p<.01$

All crosstabs have 3 d.f.

In sum I find support for Hypothesis 3 across a significant number of themes in editorials during George H.W. Bush's presidency, both in frequency and, in several cases, valence. Results from Tables 7-A and 7-B indicate that editorials in the *Times* and *Post* were significantly more likely during the crisis to affirm key elements of U.S. national identity, which likely served to enhance national pride and esteem while helping generate and maintain public support for the administration's handling of the crisis.

I now turn to examination of editorials from George W. Bush's presidency, both in the pre- and post-September 11 periods. Again, I find support for Hypothesis 3 across some themes, but not all. First, the top section of Table 8-A shows that seven of the nation-affirming themes appear significantly more often in crisis-related editorials than in peacetime editorials, and one nation-challenging theme – negative presidential evaluations – appears *less often* in crisis-related editorials.

Not surprisingly, articulation of both an enemy and a threat increased dramatically from peacetime to crisis periods, with each appearing in half of all crisis editorials. Words and phrases such as “terrorists,” “suicidal zealotry,” “mass murderers,” “violent extremists,” “acts of unspeakable hatred,” “religious fanatics,” “treacherous,” “cruelty,” “barbarism,” and “twisted vision of Islamic purity” were used to describe the September 11 hijackers, al-Qaeda organization, and Afghanistan's Taliban government. Notably, the word “evil” appeared only five times in all the editorials coded between September 12, 2001, and February 5, 2002, with four of these references in the *Post*. In addition to “the enemy,” descriptions of new and continuing threats to the nation were pervasive in

post-September 11 editorials as the nation came to grips with the potential for future attacks. The day after the attack, the *Times* wrote:

If a flight full of commuters can be turned into a missile of war, everything is dangerous. If four planes can be taken over simultaneously by suicidal hijackers, then we can never be quite sure again that any bad intention can be thwarted, no matter how irrational or loathsome (September 12, 2001).

Similarly, the *Post* warned about the possibility of bio-terror attacks:

In the wake of the terrorist assaults, this country can no longer afford to be complacent about the possibility of biological terrorism. Biological attacks are often dismissed as far-out science fiction or as beyond moral imagination. They are neither. The terrorists have no moral limits, and a crude attack with biological weapons is probably simpler to pull off than what the terrorists accomplished already (September 23, 2001).

Table 8-A  
Presence of National Identity Themes in Editorials for George W. Bush

	Peacetime (n = 52)	Crisis (n = 171)	X <sup>2</sup>	p<
Articulation of an enemy	7.7%	49.1%	28.65	.001
Articulation of a threat	5.8%	51.5%	34.47	.001
Negative presidential evaluations*	30.8%	13.5%	8.29	.01
Resolve/determination	5.8%	22.2%	7.19	.01
Collective language	0.0%	9.9%	5.60	.02
Articulation of U.S. unity	5.8%	19.9%	5.74	.02
Mention of world support	0.0%	7.6%	4.20	.04
Articulation of U.S. strength	50.0%	63.7%	3.15	.08
Noble/righteous goals	1.9%	8.2%		n.s
World leadership	23.1%	32.2%		n.s
Positive presidential evaluations	15.4%	18.1%		n.s
Heroism/courage	5.8%	8.8%		n.s
Patriotism/pride/dignity	1.9%	7.0%		n.s
U.S. values (in general)	1.9%	8.2%		n.s
Articulation of U.S. divisiveness*	3.8%	1.8%		n.s
Peacefulness/compassion	19.2%	28.7%		n.s
Religious language	0.0%	4.7%		n.s
Democracy/freedom	21.2%	24.6%		n.s
Pluralism/tolerance	11.5%	11.7%		n.s
Positive historical references	5.8%	9.9%		n.s
Articulation of U.S. weakness*	71.2%	69.6%		n.s
Mention of world opposition*	0.0%	0.6%		n.s
Individualism	5.8%	3.5%		n.s
Capitalism/economic values	11.5%	5.8%		n.s
Negative historical references*	13.5%	21.6%		n.s
Justice/fairness	63.5%	22.2%	31.25	.001
Progress/innovation	11.5%	4.1%	4.03	.05

*All crosstabs have 1 d.f.*

*\* Nation-challenging theme*

The *Post* also offered sobering words about the potential for more attacks following the initiation of the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan:

The threats that the country faces are real: They won't be brought to an end until the government has successfully carried out the battle it is now waging against those who mean to do America harm. Simply engaging in that fight heightens the likelihood of a retaliatory strike. There's no point in hiding that reality (October 19, 2001).

These frequent references to threats facing the nation, coupled with the similar themes from President Bush in his public addresses, likely had important consequences for public support for the war on terrorism and homeland security measures that otherwise may not have been palatable to the nation before September 11.

As perhaps one of the most important symbols of U.S. national identity, the president attained a new stature after the September 11 attacks. Table 8-A shows that negative evaluations of President Bush decreased from 31% in peacetime to 14% during the crisis. This, combined with a slight although not-statistically significant increase in positive evaluations, suggests that editorials after September 11 talked about President Bush differently as he assumed the responsibility of guiding the nation through the crisis. The *Times* in particular seemed to be grading President Bush's performance at every turn. The newspaper faulted President Bush for getting off to a shaky start right after the September 11 attacks, and called him "an untested figure in the eyes of many Americans" (September 13, 2001). However, a few days later, the *Times* praised the President's September 14 address at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C., saying that he "struck the note of somber confidence that the nation was looking for" (September 17,



2001). The *Times* praised the president for connecting with New Yorkers during his visit with rescue workers at the World Trade Center site:

New York City and George W. Bush were never a natural couple until last week. Now, Mr. Bush has managed to reach out in ways both symbolic and practical. In its greatest hour of need, the city must be grateful that he rose to the occasion, and demonstrated that he is president of the entire country (September 17, 2001).

The *Times* ended the editorial by saying, "By his actions over the last week, Mr. Bush has won the first battle of the war."

After the president addressed the nation and a joint session of Congress on September 20, both the *Times* and the *Post* responded with approval. The *Post* described his speech as "clear and confident," saying, "The struggle to which he called the country last night is a just one, and we think he was right to leave no room for retreat"

(September 21, 2001). The *Times* went further:

In a firm and forceful address, Mr. Bush rose to the challenge of making what may be the most critical speech of his life. Urging the American people to be both brave and patient, the president rallied Congress, the nation and its allies abroad to what promises to be a long and painful fight against a ruthless enemy (September 20, 2001).

The *Times* concluded:

Mr. Bush accomplished everything he needed to do last night. He was as strong and forthright as the nation could have wished, while also maintaining a calm that must have reassured other nations that the United States will be prudent as well as brave (September 21, 2001).

After President Bush addressed the nation in a primetime press conference on October 11, the *Times* again lauded his performance, saying he had assumed a "new gravitas" (October 12, 2001). Further, the *Times* wrote:

The George W. Bush who addressed the nation at a primetime news conference yesterday appeared to be a different man from the one who was barely elected president last year, or even the man who led the country a month ago. He seemed more confident, determined and sure of his purpose and was in full command of the complex array of political and military challenges that he faces... As he reflected on the sorrow, compassion and determination that have swept the country since those horrifying hours on the morning of Sept. 11, he seemed to be a leader whom the nation could follow in these difficult times (October 12, 2001).

The president's high standing continued through his January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, particularly in the *Times*, which wrote:

Contrary to most predictions of a year or even six months ago, Mr. Bush has soared to heights of popularity enjoyed by few modern presidents. His prosecution of the war against terror has given Americans a new appreciation for his character and confidence in his leadership (January 30, 2002).

President Bush did endure some serious criticism during the crisis period, particularly in regard to his administration's handling of civil liberties issues, for failing to address pressing domestic issues, and for trying to push through tax cuts that were perceived as mainly benefiting the wealthy. Clearly, however, his stature among the media and the American public improved dramatically in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

Another theme that significantly increased in crisis editorials was articulation of U.S. resolve and determination. Indeed, language in *Times* and *Post* editorials was almost every bit as defiant as President Bush's. The *Post*, the day after the attacks, said that the citizens of Washington D.C "did not give in to full-scale panic. That alone denied the terrorists the victory they sought. And it revealed a core of strength in our region that will prepare us for whatever may come next" (September 12, 2001). Comparing the September 11 attacks to Pearl Harbor, the *Post* also wrote:

The nation responded then without panic but with iron determination to defend itself and punish the aggressors. The response today must be as decisive — to the mass murderers who planned and carried out the attack, and to any nation or nations that gave them shelter and encouragement (September 12, 2001).

Perhaps because the impact of the attacks was felt more acutely in New York City, both in terms of loss of life and physical damage, the editorials in the *Times* tended to be even more defiant and resolute. For instance, a September 16 editorial said:

Tomorrow, Americans will try to return to normal. This is a resilient country and even in New York City, most citizens have already chosen to go back to their regular routines as quickly as possible... There has been no finer rebuke to their [the terrorists'] pretensions than America's determination to press on.

Statements of resolve and determination in the *Times* not only articulated the need to win the war on terrorism, but expressed the hope that a better future could emerge from the ashes of the attacks, as did this editorial discussing the re-opening of Wall Street:

Moreover, this country's best moments often come at the times of great challenge. The solidarity and determination the nation develops in the weeks ahead could create a better America and an even stronger economy (September 18, 2001).

As the weeks went on, the defiance of these editorials gave way to a more reflective description of U.S. resolve, as in this *Times* editorial about Americans traveling during the Thanksgiving holiday:

It seems strange that Americans should need to be reminded what an enormous country this is and how resolute, how stalwart, the American landscape can be.... Whatever our own thoughts are, however we find ourselves brooding on the journey, the mute resilience of the country we're crossing will remind us how to keep moving (November 21, 2001).

Table 8-A shows that post-September 11 editorials also were much more likely to use collective words such as “we” and “us” and “our.” It seems after September 11, editorials were attempting to draw readers in by using these words, creating a “national

space” that was meant as much to comfort the public as it was to inform them. Editorial writers didn’t seem content to comment on the attacks from afar. By using these simple yet powerful first-person pronouns, these two papers, and many other news media, purported to speak for the nation and its citizens.

Both papers adopted these conventions immediately after the attacks, offering reflections that became all the more meaningful as the editorial writers sought, in their own way to unite their readers in a “kinship of grief.” The *Times* wrote on September 12, “We look back at sunrise yesterday through pillars of smoke and dust, down streets snowed under with atomized debris of the skyline, and we understand that everything has changed.” Similarly, the *Post* wrote, “It will be days or weeks before we can know the particulars of the death and destruction at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania, and absorb the magnitude of the losses; but what we know already is shocking, wrenching and infuriating” (September 12, 2001).

In a parallel vein, descriptions of U.S. unity also increased significantly between peacetime and crisis editorials. Describing the challenges facing President Bush after the attacks, the *Times* stated, “Americans are more than ready to rise up and give him their support” (September 12, 2001). On September 16, the *Times* offered a hopeful outlook for life after September 11, saying, “Americans desperately want to commit to something greater than themselves” (September 16, 2001). When the military offensive began, the *Times* said, “The American people, despite their grief and anger, have been patient as they waited for action. Now that it has begun, they will support whatever efforts it takes to carry out this mission properly” (October 8, 2001). Descriptions of U.S. unity focused

both on the public and Congress. A September 29, 2001, *Times* editorial praised congressional leaders for the new spirit of bipartisanship in Washington: "Partisan plotting is out of season. Lunching with a legislator from the other party is au courant." Likewise, the *Post* wrote on October 1, "Both parties in Congress have suspended their normal agendas to unite in dealing with the crisis of terrorist attacks on American soil. It was, and is, the right thing to do, and they've done it well." Further, these descriptions of U.S. unity were not merely confined to the immediate aftermath of the attacks. On January 1, 2002, a full three and a half months after the attacks, the *Post* wrote:

More likely what the country did was to reaffirm something about it that has always perplexed if not amazed much of the world, and that is the extraordinary sense of nationality that holds things together here when the going gets bad. The polls showing close to nine people out of 10 in America consistently supporting the administration's measures after the terror attacks cut across an increasingly varied mix of peoples, cultures, accents and (present and former) nationalities.

In addition to describing the nation as united, editorials after September 11 were significantly more likely to describe the world as united with or supporting America. The *Post* on September 17, 2001, wrote, "Americans were confronted last week by an act of unspeakable hatred for their country, but they also were touched by signs of solidarity and affection and respect around the world." The *Times*, in a piece titled "The Pilgrimage to Lower Manhattan," said, "Mourners pour into Lower Manhattan from all over the world, seeking a glimpse of the disaster site and a place to leave tokens of sympathy and support" (November 14, 2001). Like the president, the two newspapers were emphatic in their editorials that the world, not just America, had suffered on September 11, and that the world had a stake in the war on terrorism. The day after the

start of the air campaign in Afghanistan, the *Post* wrote, “The broad coalition supporting and participating in the offensive showed that this is not a fight of America against the world but of the world against lawlessness” (October 8, 2001).

After the September 11 attacks, editorials in the *Times* and *Post* consistently articulated notions of American strength and efficacy. The successful military campaign in Afghanistan was a particularly important occasion for reaffirming ideas of American power and dominance. When the Taliban regime fell at Kandahar on December 7, the *Post* wrote glowingly of U.S. effectiveness on the battlefield:

The United States and its allies have put an end to one of the world’s most vile regimes, liberated one of its most oppressed and needy peoples, and proven to the world that the principle President Bush laid out after Sept. 11 can and will be enforced: Those who harbor terrorists “will share in their fate.” ... That it was done in this case with modest loss is a credit to the administration and armed forces, and gives cause to believe that as the third month since Sept. 11 draws to a close, the United States has dealt the terrorists who attacked it a heavy initial blow (December 8, 2001).

The bottom section of Table 8-A shows that two themes appeared significantly more often in peacetime editorials – justice/fairness and progress/innovation. The first of these – justice – was a dominant theme in the editorials coded in the pre-September 11 period, but as Table 8-B will show, editorials consistently faulted America in both time periods for not upholding the ideals of justice, fairness and ethics. I will return to this point shortly. That the progress theme appears more often in peacetime editorials is not surprising, and is consistent with editorials during George H.W. Bush’s presidency as well as both presidents’ speeches.

The middle section of Table 8-A shows that, while not statistically significant, most of these remaining themes support Hypothesis 3, appearing more frequently in crisis editorials than in peacetime editorials. It is possible that the low numbers of peacetime editorials ( $n=52$ ) accounts for the lack of statistically significant results in some cases. Among these findings, what is perhaps most striking is the consistent articulation of U.S. weaknesses and ineffectiveness from peacetime to crisis periods, with about 70% of editorials in both periods discussing some sort of U.S. weakness or failure. In the peacetime period, these references focused on familiar domestic issues such as education, health care, crime, the economy and problems with the federal budget. After the September 11 attacks, however, American weaknesses and failures, instead of receding into the background, were a front-and-center part of the crisis. The nation had been laid low, its centers of military and economic power had been struck, and the country assumed a role in which it was unaccustomed – that of a victim. The *Times* described the carnage in New York City in the wake of the attacks:

Lower Manhattan had become an ashen shell of itself, all but a Pompei under the impact of a terrorist attack involving two airliners that crashed into the World Trade Center and then brought its twin towers down. In Washington, a third plane had plunged into the Pentagon... For all Americans, the unimaginable became real (September 12, 2001).

In addition, the attacks exposed glaring weaknesses in American intelligence and law enforcement operations, subjects that were discussed at length in the editorial pages of the *Times* and the *Post*. “Why was there no warning?” asked the *Post* in the headline of a September 15 editorial. It continued:

This country spends tens of billions of dollars a year on intelligence activity. The Justice Department, in addition, spends \$23 billion to enforce the law. Given the size and technical capabilities of these agencies, how could they not have had even an inkling of the attacks that took place this week? (September 15, 2001).

As the crisis wore on, editorial writers highlighted other perceived U.S.

weaknesses, such as the economy, airline safety, continuing homeland security problems, and government failures to protect Americans' civil liberties. So while it appears that editorials after September 11 were willing to tap into Americans' beliefs about their strength as a nation and as a people, they also were unwilling to gloss over U.S. weakness and failures that both precipitated the crisis and arose *in response to* the crisis.

Turning now to Table 8-B, I examine the *valences* of the seven U.S. values and six national character dimensions to understand how editorials associated these themes with the United States in the two time periods – whether they characterized America as upholding these ideals, as failing to uphold them, or some mix of judgments. Table 8-B indicates that four of 11 valences showed significant differences between peacetime and crisis editorials – capitalism, heroism/courage, resolve/determination, and peacefulness/compassion. The first of these, capitalism, seems an unlikely theme to become more positive during the crisis period. This finding may be a result of one of America's economic centers being targeted in the September 11 attacks. The *Times* described the Twin Towers not just as “an economic nerve center,” but as “a symbol of American prosperity” (September 12, 2001). After Wall Street reopened, the *Times* described it as a minor victory in the nation's fight to return to normal: “Everyone knows intuitively what a feat it was to resume trading on Monday, what a powerful



demonstration of will and improvised engineering that was" (September 20, 2001). In addition, the *Times* appeared to have a vested interest in affirming New York City's role in the American economic system:

Virtually everyone in New York City, and indeed most of the country, understands the importance and urgency of rebuilding downtown Manhattan. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack, it is vital to reaffirm the city's status as a premier financial center and restore hope to a battered neighborhood (September 24, 2001).

Editorials also were more *affirming* in their attributions of heroic qualities to the nation and its citizens after September 11, particularly in the week immediately after the attacks. The *Post* wrote on September 13, "The terror also has summoned heroes whose examples lift the spirits and make it easier to live on." That same day, the *Times* wrote:

Sooner or later, we all wonder if we have it in us to be brave when bravery is needed. Ever since New York City was struck by a terrorist attack, the answer has been coming in, and it is just what we hoped for and expected (September 13, 2001).

Two days later, the *Times* followed up with a piece titled, "Heroes Amid the Horror" which praised the actions of New York City's emergency response personnel:

[The] record will show that at a moment of supreme national horror, New Yorkers were fortunate to have at the ready a remarkably brave cadre of firefighters, police officers, emergency personnel and volunteers from around the country. Pushing aside thoughts about their own personal safety and grief for fallen colleagues, they gave the world a vision of the valor and selflessness that is the best face of America (September 15, 2001).

Table 8-B  
Valence of U.S. Values and National Character Dimensions in Editorials  
for President George W. Bush

	Critical	Mixed	Affirming		
<b>Democracy/freedom</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	36.4%	9.1%	54.5%	100% (n=11)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	19.0%	23.8%	57.1%	100% (n=42)	
<b>Pluralism/tolerance</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%	100% (n=6)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	15.0%	15.0%	70.0%	100% (n=20)	
<b>Progress/innovation</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100% (n=6)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	100% (n=7)	
<b>Capitalism/economic values</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100% (n=6)	$\chi^2=6.89$
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	100% (n=10)	$p<.04$
<b>Individualism</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100% (n=3)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100% (n=6)	
<b>Justice/fairness</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	57.6%	21.2%	21.2%	100% (n=33)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	44.7%	28.9%	26.4%	100% (n=38)	
<b>U.S. values (in general)</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	7.1%	7.1%	85.7%	100% (n=14)	
<b>Heroism/courage</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100% (n=3)	$\chi^2=5.29$
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=15)	$p<.03$
<b>Patriotism/pride/dignity</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	8.3%	91.7%	100% (n=12)	
<b>Resolve/determination</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100% (n=3)	$\chi^2=14.06$
<i>Crisis</i>	0.0%	15.8%	84.2%	100% (n=38)	$p<.001$
<b>Peacefulness/compassion</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	100% (n=10)	$\chi^2=9.31$
<i>Crisis</i>	6.1%	4.1%	89.8%	100% (n=49)	$p<.01$
<b>Noble/righteous goals</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100% (n=1)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	7.1%	0.0%	92.9%	100% (n=14)	
<b>World leadership</b>					
<i>Peacetime</i>	16.7%	25.0%	58.3%	100% (n=12)	n.s.
<i>Crisis</i>	7.3%	23.6%	69.1%	100% (n=55)	

All crosstabs have 3 d.f.

Despite the statistical difference between peacetime and crisis editorials for this valence, the low number of cases within peacetime editorials makes the results somewhat suspect. Nonetheless, the fact that descriptions of heroism and bravery became an important part of September 11 discourse is undeniable.

A similar situation exists for the next variable that differed significantly between peacetime and crisis — U.S. resolve and determination. This variable appeared only three times in peacetime editorials, making valid comparisons with the crisis period ( $n=38$ ) difficult. Ultimately, though, it is meaningful that editorials infrequently questioned U.S. resolve and determination to prevail during the crisis period. Only 16% of editorials that discussed U.S. resolve after September 11 raised questions about the ability of the nation to maintain it, and none was *fully* critical of it. For the most part, editorials were affirming (84%) in their descriptions of U.S. resolve, and articulated the determination of the government and the American people to wage a long and costly struggle to defeat terrorism. For instance, when the military offensive began in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda and the Taliban government, the *Times* wrote:

Mr. Bin Laden has warned that Americans may never again feel secure. Right now, we can only know that they feel steadfast, and united in the determination that, however long it takes, Mr. Bin Laden and his associates will be hunted down and eventually defeated (October 8, 2001).

The last valence that showed a statistical difference between peacetime and crisis editorials was peacefulness/compassion. Forty percent of peacetime editorials that discussed peacefulness and compassion were critical of the nation. For instance, both the *Times* and *Post* wrote editorials on January 24, 2001, critical of the Bush administration

for withdrawing foreign aid money for overseas clinics that provide or promote abortions. The *Times* said this decision contradicted the president's pledge to act with humility rather than arrogance in foreign relations and said it would affect the poorest and most defenseless citizens or nations that rely on this aid. After September 11, however, editorials frequently affirmed notions of Americans' peaceful nature and their compassion for their fellow citizens. The outpouring of charitable donations, the expressions of national grief and sympathy for the victims of the terrorist attacks, and the Bush administration's promise to combine humanitarian efforts with the military campaign in Afghanistan all drew praise from the *Times* and the *Post*.

Finally from Table 8-B, it is worth mentioning two valences that produced somewhat surprising results during both time periods – democracy/freedom and justice/fairness. The table shows that editorials were affirming on the first theme *less than 60%* of the time in both time periods, with the rest of the references mixed or critical. In the case of justice/fairness, editorials were affirming *less than 30%* of the time in both periods and were critical or mixed the majority of the time. When the editorial pages of the *Times* and the *Post* discussed issues related to these principles, they frequently took the government to task for not upholding them. For instance, in peacetime editorials, both newspapers were critical of President Bush's nomination of John Ashcroft for Attorney General, strongly raising concerns about his record on civil rights, respect for civil liberties, and ability to dispense justice evenhandedly. President Bush's tax cut proposal was also the subject of much criticism, as both newspapers charged that it unfairly benefited wealthier Americans. Further criticism in peacetime

editorials was directed at outgoing President Clinton for “undermining the pursuit of justice” in his last minute pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich. The *Times* called the decision “indefensible” and the *Post* called President Clinton’s actions “unpardonable.”

Immediately after the September 11 attacks, democratic values and the pursuit of justice came immediately to the forefront. Both papers issued cautionary warnings about curbing civil liberties and dispensing with due process in an effort to crack down on terrorism. On September 12, the *Post* wrote:

The challenge ahead will require strengthening U.S. defenses and intelligence at home in ways consistent with American values... the country cannot allow terrorists to alter the fundamental openness of U.S. society or the government’s respect for civil liberties.

The *Times* offered the same sentiment on September 12:

Americans must rethink how to safeguard the country without bartering away the rights and privileges of the free society that we are defending. The temptation will be great in the days ahead to write draconian new laws that give law enforcement agencies – or even military forces – a right to undermine the civil liberties that shape the character of the United States. President Bush and the Congress must carefully balance the need for heightened security with the need to protect the constitutional rights of Americans.

In the eyes of both newspapers, however, these warnings went largely unheeded. Both papers were extremely critical of the Bush Administration, particularly Attorney General Ashcroft, on several key issues, namely: 1) provisions of the USA Patriot Act that greatly expanded law enforcement powers; 2) the government’s plan to use military tribunals to try suspected terrorists; and 3) the government’s indefinite detention of Arab and Muslim immigrants coupled with its unwillingness to provide information about those detainees. The *Post* called Ashcroft’s order allowing tape recordings of conversations between

suspected terrorists and their attorneys “an affront to democracy” (November 12, 2001).

On December 2, 2001, the *Times* devoted its entire editorial section to the issues of democracy and justice in the war on terrorism in a piece titled “Justice Deformed: War and the Constitution.” The editorial concluded:

Our history is a story of continuous struggles to keep the government from sectioning off one segment of humanity as unworthy of the same basic civil rights as everyone else. This is not the time to start infringing the rights of people whose only relationship with international terrorism may be a shared nationality, religion or ethnic background. We will not be judged by how we hold to our values when it is easy, but when it is difficult. The whole world is watching.

Clearly, in the eyes of two of the nation’s leading newspapers, America was not upholding the ideals of justice and democracy during the war on terrorism; indeed, the data show that these two themes represented the most significant counter to the overall affirmation of U.S. national identity in editorials following September 11.

Finally for this hypothesis, I calculated the *National Identity Mean* (NIM) for editorials in the peacetime and crisis periods. The NIM calculation includes the additional variables in the editorial coding scheme. Collective language and positive presidential evaluations (each worth +1) and negative presidential evaluations (-1) were added, as were the seven U.S. values variables and six national character dimensions, for which I assigned points based on the associated valences -- +1 if valence was “affirming,” 0 if the valence was mixed, and -1 if the valence was critical. If the theme did not appear at all, I assigned it a 0.

Comparison of NIMs between peacetime and crisis editorials for both presidents provides added support for Hypothesis 3. In the case of editorials during George H.W.

Bush's presidency, the peacetime NIM was .23 while the mean during the Persian Gulf crisis was 3.19 ( $t = 8.58, p < .001$ ). For George W. Bush, editorials during peacetime had a NIM of -.27 while editorials following the September 11 attacks had a mean of 2.37 ( $t = 5.08, p < .001$ ).

In sum, I find solid evidence for Hypothesis 3, both in terms of individual themes and for the aggregate mean of all national identity themes. Editorials in the *Times* and *Post* contained significantly greater national identity discourse during the crisis periods of the Gulf War and "war on terrorism."

#### ***Hypothesis 4***

With a focus solely on George H.W. Bush and the Persian Gulf crisis, hypothesis 4 posits that editorials in the Gulf War period (8/8/90 to the president's 3/6/91 "victory" address) will exhibit an *increasing* trend over time in the number of themes and pro-U.S. valence of those themes, as U.S. military successes mounted and "victory" was achieved. In this analysis, I rely solely on the NIM because the numbers for most of the individual themes are too low to make valid statistical comparisons between time periods. To test this hypothesis, editorials were grouped according to the presidential address that they followed, and the group NIMs of the editorials are presented graphically in Figure 3. To be clear, then, since I analyzed 12 major addresses by George H. W. Bush during the crisis period, there are 12 groups of crisis editorials for this analysis. Additionally, I include the editorials following Bush's three peacetime speeches as a comparison.

In most cases, each grouping represents a full week of editorials. However, in some cases, such as the February 26, 1991, address, the speech came only three days after

the president's address on February 23. In this case, all editorials February 24 to 26 were assigned to the February 23 speech. Likewise, the February 27 address came only a day after the February 26 address. Thus, only editorials on February 27 are assigned to the February 26 address, while editorials from February 28 to March 6 were assigned to the February 27 address. These situations were uncommon, however.

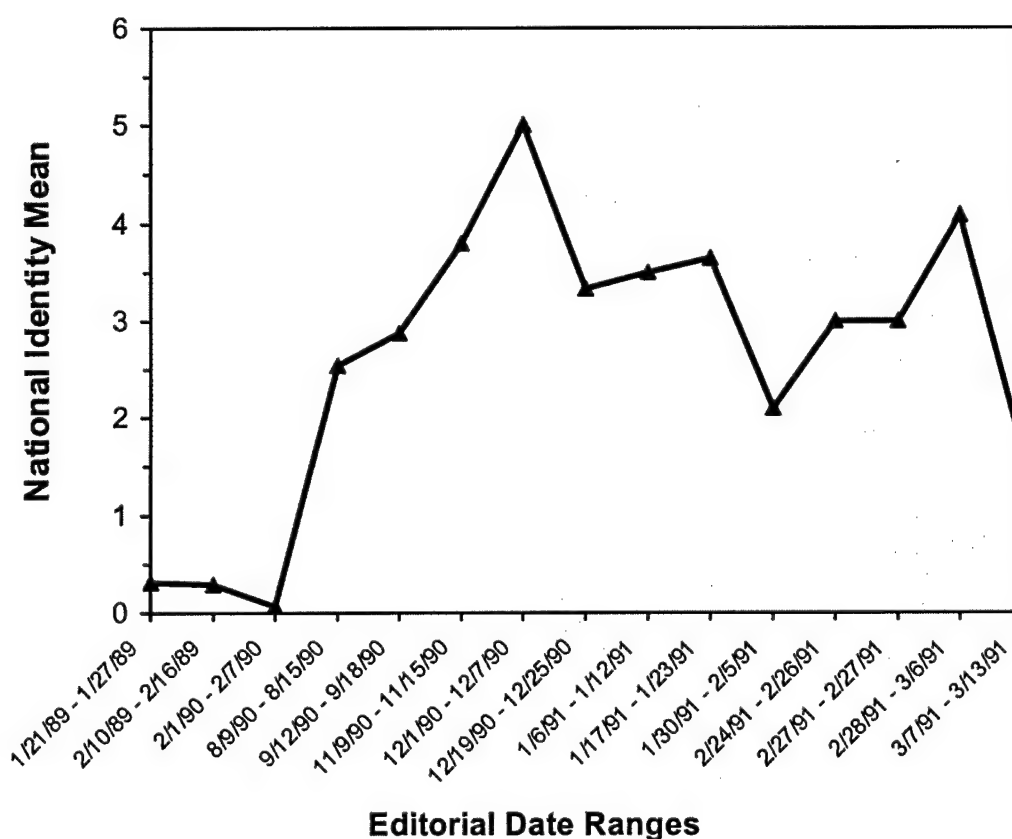


Figure 3  
National Identity Mean of Editorials After Presidential Addresses by George H.W. Bush

Figure 3 does not exhibit the expected pattern of increasing affirmation of national identity as the crisis proceeds. NIMs for the groups of crisis editorials range



from a high of 5.0 following Bush's press conference on November 30, 1990, to a low of 1.67 following the president's last address to the nation on March 6, 1991. Further, there appears to be no consistent upward or downward trend in means over time. Editorials following President Bush's first crisis speech (editorial dates of August 9-15, 1990) have a NIM of 2.54 – not overwhelming, but certainly a stark contrast between the previous three groups of peacetime editorials. From there, the editorials climb steadily in their NIMs until the November 30 press conference. That press conference came on the heels of the Bush administration winning a new U.N. resolution that strengthened diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis but set a January 15, 1991, deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. The resolution was hailed as a major victory for President Bush as editorials in both papers praised his efforts to work with the United Nations to resolve the crisis peacefully. Editorial means dropped after this, but rose again to 3.65 following President Bush's address announcing the start of the air war (editorial dates of January 17-23, 1991). The NIM dropped again to 2.1 following the president's State of the Union address (editorial dates of January 30 to February 5, 1991) but then rose steadily over the next three addresses, culminating in a 4.1 NIM following the president's address announcing the end of combat operations in the Gulf (editorial dates of February 28 to March 6, 1991). The value of this mean for editorials immediately following the allied victory over Iraq is consistent with my hypothesis, and is indeed higher than all but one of the previous NIMs.

It may seem surprising, then, that the NIM dropped sharply to 1.67 following Bush's address to the nation and a joint session of Congress on March 6, 1991. It isn't,

however, considering that the war itself had concluded more than a week earlier; further, President Bush had already given a “victory speech” of sorts on February 27 that was followed by the highest editorial NIM since early in the crisis. Additionally, by the time President Bush made this final speech to the nation in front of Congress, most crisis editorials had shifted their focus from celebrating America’s victory to issues such as the future of post-war Iraq and how America was going to pay for the war.

Thus, while the data do not fully support Hypothesis 4, they do offer several insights into editorial expressions of national identity over this crisis. First, the data provide yet another useful contrast between affirmation of national identity in peacetime and in crises. And second, the data clearly indicate that editorials in the two newspapers in this study saw America’s victory in the Gulf War as a significant moment for U.S. national identity as the country finally emerged from the shadow of Vietnam.

### ***Hypothesis 5***

Hypothesis 5 predicts that editorials in the war on terrorism period (9/12/01 to the president’s 2002 State of the Union address on 1/29/02) will exhibit a *decreasing* trend over time in the number of national identity themes and pro-U.S. valence of those themes, as the September 11 events faded and the difficulty of “victory” became apparent. Since I analyzed nine major addresses by George W. Bush during the crisis period, there are nine corresponding groups of crisis editorials in this analysis. In most cases, each group represents a full week of editorials. However, in some cases, such as the September 14 address at the National Cathedral, the speech came only three days after the president’s address on September 11. In this case, all editorials September 12 to

14 were assigned to the September 11 speech. All editorials from September 15 to 20 were assigned to the September 14 speech. I also included the mean plots for President Bush's two peacetime speeches as a comparison.

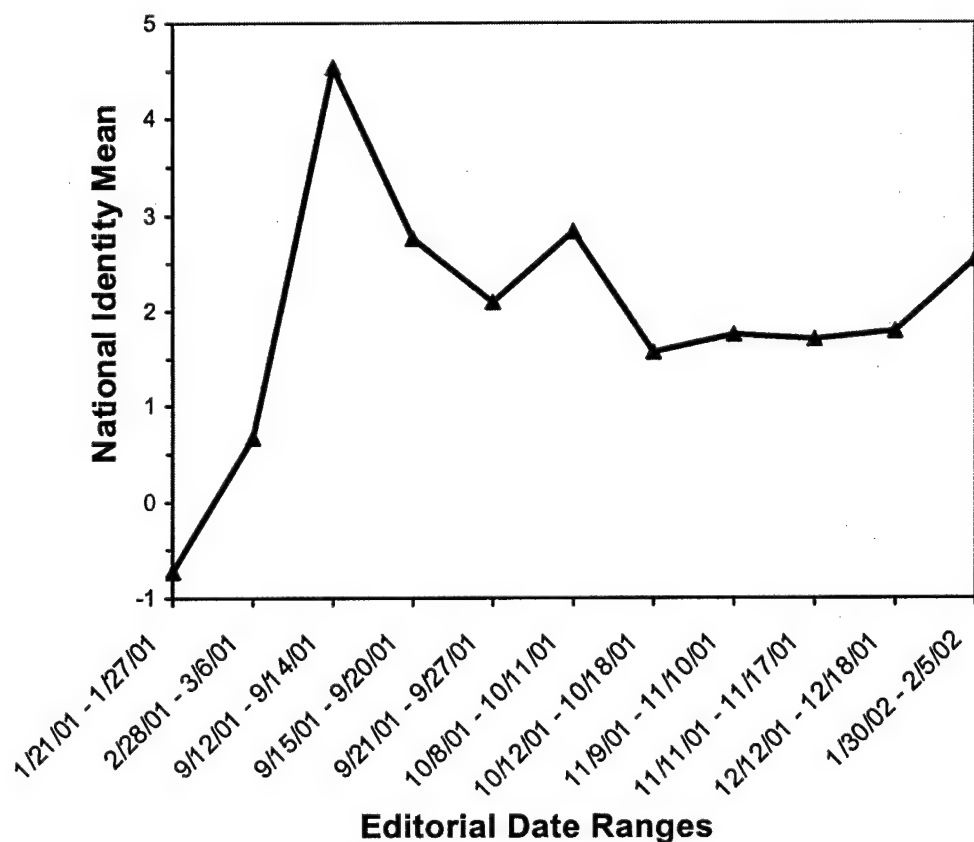


Figure 4  
National Identity Mean of Editorials After Presidential Addresses by George H.W. Bush

Figure 4 offers general support for Hypothesis 5. Editorials immediately following the terrorist attacks (beginning with Speech 3) are the most *affirming* of national identity with a mean of 4.53. After those initial editorials however, the NIM exhibits a decreasing trend over the course of the crisis, with minor spikes coming in

editorials immediately following the beginning of the military campaign in Afghanistan (editorial dates of October 8-11, 2001) and President Bush's State of the Union Address (editorial dates of January 30 to February 5, 2002). These results appear to confirm my hypothesis, that as the immediacy of the crisis dissipated, so too would the overall affirmation of national identity in editorials. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that editorials in the latter part of the crisis are still more affirming of national identity than the peacetime editorials in the sample.

These results, then, demonstrate three key points. First they indicate how important the days immediately following the terrorist attacks were for expressions of national identity in editorials. Second, they show that this level of affirmation could not be sustained as the difficulty of total "victory" became apparent and as the two newspapers increasingly faulted the government for failing to uphold fundamental democratic principles and questioned its tactics in the pursuit of justice. And third, these results reconfirm that post-September 11 editorials were nonetheless much more affirmative of national identity than peacetime editorials.

### ***Research Question 2-A***

My first newspaper editorial research question explores whether editorials in the two days immediately following each presidential national address during the crisis period contained more national-identity discourse than editorials in the following five days. My goal is to explore any direct relationship that might exist between the president's major addresses in each crisis and the editorials that appear directly after those addresses. Once again, I rely on the NIMs in this analysis since numbers of

individual themes are too low in many cases to make valid comparisons. Specifically, I compared the NIMs for editorials in the two-day periods immediately after each presidential crisis address with the NIMs of editorials in the subsequent five days (as noted, sometimes it is fewer than five days). Results indicate that in both crises, editorials immediately following the presidential addresses exhibited higher levels of national identity discourse than those in following days.

In the Persian Gulf crisis, the NIM for editorials in the two days after each presidential address was 4.17, while the NIM for editorials in subsequent days was 2.73 ( $t = 2.38, p < .02$ ). In the “war on terrorism” period, the NIM for editorials in the two-day period after each presidential address was 3.62, while the NIM for editorials in subsequent days was 1.69 ( $t = 3.8, p < .001$ ). Both of these differences are statistically significant and suggest that the editorial boards of these newspapers responded particularly favorably to the presidents’ addresses in these crises, but that these responses to the addresses did not carry over to other discussion of the crises or presidents in subsequent editorials.

### ***Research Question 2-B***

Research Question 2-B explores potential differences *between the two newspapers* in this study. That is, was one newspaper more or less affirming of U.S. national identity than the other in both peacetime and crisis periods? For this analysis, I include *all* editorials from the crisis periods, not just the ones within a week of each key presidential speech. I do so because my interest here is solely on the media, and not on the relationship between presidential addresses and subsequent editorials.

Once again, I start by discussing editorials during George H.W. Bush's presidency. As a first step, I ran crosstabs between news publication and each national identity theme. During peacetime ( $n=93$ ), I found significant differences between publications for only one theme – negative presidential evaluations ( $X^2=7.85, p<.001$ ). A full 33% of all editorials in the *Times* offered some criticism of President Bush, while only 10% of editorials in the *Post* did so. Overall however, the papers were remarkably similar in this time period. Indeed, the NIMs confirm this, with the *Times* producing a mean of .07 and the *Post* a mean of .35. During the Gulf crisis ( $n=213$ ), the *Times* was significantly more affirming on three themes – justice/fairness, patriotism/ pride/dignity, and world support, while the *Post* was more affirming than the *Times* on two themes – U.S. resolve and negative evaluations of the president. At the aggregate level however, the NIMs are remarkably congruent. The NIM for the *Times* is 3.00 while the NIM for the *Post* is 3.14, indicating overall that the editorial staffs of the two newspapers approached the crisis in a similar manner.

I now turn to editorials during George W. Bush's presidency, both in peacetime and the war on terrorism. In peacetime editorials ( $n=52$ ), the two newspapers differed significantly on only one theme – positive historical references – with the *Times* being more affirming than the *Post*. At the aggregate level, the two papers were not significantly different, with the *Times* producing a mean of .15 and the *Post* a mean of -.69. For crisis editorials ( $n=360$ ), the *Post* emphasized the themes of democracy/freedom and world support significantly more often than the *Times*. Conversely, editorials in the *Times* contained the themes U.S. unity, heroism/courage,

and collective language more often than the *Post* and were more affirming than the *Post* for the valences of U.S. resolve and peacefulness/compassion. At the aggregate level, the *Times* (2.01) had a higher NIM than the *Post* (1.70), but the difference was not statistically significant.

These results, then, indicate that these two leading newspapers offered a similar construction and articulation of U.S. national identity in both peacetime and crisis editorials during both presidents' tenures. It is true that they differed on some individual themes, particularly in the post-September 11 period. However, at the aggregate level, *Times* and *Post* editorials were remarkably similar, supporting the conclusions of some scholars (e.g. Gans, 1979; Entman, 1991) that despite the large number of news organizations, U.S. media cover the news in very much the same way.

## Chapter V: Discussion

These findings indicate that U.S. national identity was a clear emphasis in both presidential communications and editorial content of two leading newspapers during two of the country's most significant crises in recent history. Findings suggest that both Presidents Bush *consciously* and *strategically* articulated visions of U.S. national identity in their public addresses in order to affirm longstanding notions of American exceptionalism and mobilize public support for national objectives. Their conceptions of U.S. national identity placed clear emphases on U.S. strength and national values while constructing "enemies" against which the nation could rally. Similarly, editorials in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* affirmed many of the same elements of U.S. national identity, no doubt helping to generate and maintain public support in both crises. Further, editorials right after major presidential addresses were particularly affirming of national identity, suggesting that presidents in their crisis addresses have great potential to set the national identity "agenda" and "frame" among the media and the public. But editorials in these papers also didn't hesitate to raise concerns, particularly after the September 11 attacks, when they believed citizens, military, or government leaders were not upholding the principles and ideals commonly considered to define the nation. Several facets of these findings, I believe, offer insight into relations among the president, U.S. national identity, and the news media, particularly when the pressure for patriotism increases in times of crisis.



### *National identity and presidential discourse*

Analysis of major addresses revealed that articulation of U.S. national identity was pervasive in both peacetime and crisis periods for the Presidents Bush. Indeed it appears to be one of the fundamental roles of the president to rhetorically construct and reconstruct the nation as a way of maintaining a sense of collective identity in a large “imagined community,” in which the vast majority of Americans will never know more than a handful of their fellow citizens. In peacetime speeches, particularly in inaugural addresses and State of the Union addresses, both presidents articulated a vision of America that affirmed fundamental democratic principles, highlighted U.S. strength and power, described Americans as a peaceful and compassionate people, and promoted ideas of national unity and a shared understanding of “what it means to be American.”

Inherent in each of these peacetime speeches is what Beasley (2001) calls the “myth of ideological consensus,” or the idea that all Americans share the same understanding of the principles and ideals that define the nation. For example, comments by George W. Bush in his inaugural address suggest such a shared understanding: “America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens.” While critics argue the nation does not always live up to the principles and ideals that are commonly held to define the nation, presidents nonetheless put forth their vision of these principles in ways that are designed ultimately to serve their political goals. It is not surprising that George W. Bush would use this type of “unifying”

rhetoric, particularly after a bitter election battle in which he emerged the victor while losing the popular vote.

This type of strategic political communication assumed added significance during the Persian Gulf War and the “war on terrorism” as both presidents used these themes in attempts to mobilize public and congressional support for military action, and in the latter case to rally the nation after the September 11 attacks. Further, nation-affirming language also was more *pervasive* in crisis addresses than in peacetime addresses. The results from Hypothesis 1 demonstrate moderate support for this conclusion at the individual theme level and stronger support at an aggregate level using the National Identity Mean as a gauge. Within the crises themselves, I found little support for my hypothesis (H2) that the period leading up to the initiation of military action would differ significantly from the period after military action commenced. This finding suggests two things: First, the beginning of military action appears not to be a “dividing line” for presidential articulation of national identity. A few individual themes differed between time periods, but overall NIMs before and after the start of U.S. military action in both crises were statistically the same. Second, and more importantly, results of Hypothesis 2 suggest that the rhetoric of national identity was not merely a *mobilization* strategy used early in the crises, but it was also a *sustainment* strategy designed to maintain public resolve in later stages of the crisis. This idea of *sustainment* was especially crucial in the war on terrorism, a conflict without a clear definition of victory and no end in sight.

In comparing the two presidents’ use of national identity in their major addresses, I found that some themes were more pervasive in one or the others’ crisis rhetoric.

However, overall levels of national identity as measured using the NIMs demonstrate remarkable similarity between the two presidents. The overall consistency, despite differences in the contexts of the two crises, suggests the existence of a “national identity baseline” in presidential crisis addresses, a baseline presidents will seek to achieve in order to mobilize the nation to achieve political objectives. In fact, I suggest that in both crises the presidents appeared to follow Windt’s (1983) primary rules of crisis rhetoric: 1) Establishment of a melodrama between good (U.S.) and evil (the enemy); and 2) Framing of the policy to be implemented and the support requested as *moral acts*. As in many previous conflicts, both presidents used themes of national identity to enhance national esteem while successfully defining an enemy against whom the nation could unite. By affirming positive aspects of the “U.S. self” through emphasis upon American values, U.S. strength, and steadfast U.S. resolve, and at the same time constructing a visceral portrait of an enemy lacking morals or principles, both presidents framed their respective crises in the historically familiar narrative of good vs. evil. For example, in his speech to the United Nations on November 10, 2001, George W. Bush placed this familiar theme within a historical framework:

In a second world war, we learned there is no isolation from evil. We affirmed that some crimes are so terrible they offend humanity, itself. And we resolved that the aggressions and ambitions of the wicked must be opposed early, decisively, and collectively, before they threaten us all. That evil has returned, and that cause is renewed.

Indeed, if the claim of Brands (1999, p. 239) that Americans are “obsessed with the apocalyptic struggle of good and evil” is accurate, then these communication strategies undoubtedly helped to assure Americans of their nation’s distinctiveness and

helped to mobilize the U.S. public against the nation's "enemies." Ivie (1990) goes further, arguing that "Americans traditionally have exonerated themselves of any guilt for war...by decivilizing the image of their adversaries" (p. 119). Using the rhetoric of good and evil, Ivie (2002) contends that American presidents can justify escalation of violence as a righteous response to an uncivilized enemy. At the very least, presidential discourse of good and evil offered many Americans a comforting degree of moral certainty in the conflicts, especially in the Gulf War crisis when the threat to the nation was more difficult to articulate (Coe, Domke, Graham, John, & Pickard, 2003). While George H.W. Bush argued that national interests were at stake, I submit that his "moral" argument was more compelling to the nation, and his construction of Saddam Hussein as the personification of evil ultimately formed the basis for the principled justification he needed to start a war.

In upholding Windt's second rule — framing of the policy to be implemented and the support requested as *moral acts* — both presidents rhetorically linked the outcome of the crisis with the manner in which the nation would uphold the principles and values that each president used to define the nation's identity. For instance, George H.W. Bush argued for U.S. intervention against Iraq, not only out of traditional ideas of "national interest," but because he saw Iraq as a threat to the "New World Order" he argued that America should be helping to create. Fresh from "victory" in the Cold War, the president consistently stressed America's exceptional role as a world leader with a responsibility to "defend civilized values around the world." In his crisis addresses, Bush argued that to allow Iraqi aggression to go unchecked would have been tantamount to failing to uphold

the very principles that defined the nation and made it “a beacon of freedom in a searching world.” Similarly, George W. Bush defined the events of September 11 as an attack on American ideals, and argued that the nation would prevail as long as it continued to live up to those ideals: “I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them.” In his September 20 address to the nation, he argued that the terrorists sought to destroy the democratic freedoms and the very “way of life” that defined America. The president’s strategy was clear – to frame the crisis in a way that directly linked the preservation of American freedoms and values with *his* plan for fighting the war on terrorism.

I submit, however, that due to the galvanizing nature of the September 11 attacks, George W. Bush’s communications during the war on terrorism period had more far-reaching consequences for political and public discourse than his father’s communications during the Gulf War. The younger Bush not only put the international community on notice with statements such as “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists,” but in a larger sense, his linkage of national identity to national security helped create a climate within the United States in which dissent came to be viewed as unpatriotic and anti-American. For example, in weeks after September 11 White House press secretary Ari Fleischer warned that “people have to watch what they say and watch what they do” after television talk-show host Bill Maher made comments critical of previous U.S. responses to terrorism. And in December 2001 Attorney General John Ashcroft told a Congressional panel that critics of the Bush administration “only aid terrorists” because

such commentary “gives ammunition to America’s enemies, and pause to America’s friends” (Carter & Barringer, 2001; Lewis, 2001). The backlash against dissenting views spread to the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, which issued a November 2001 report identifying 117 statements or behaviors by U.S. academic faculty and public officials that ACTA described as “blaming America first” and “giving comfort to America’s enemies” (ACTA, 2001). That the strategic communications of President Bush and members of his administration contributed to this climate is almost a certainty.

Ultimately, then, these two presidents used U.S. national identity as an effective weapon to achieve their political goals. George H.W. Bush tapped into America’s self-image as the “winner” of the Cold War and argued that as the lone remaining superpower, it had a moral obligation to take action against Iraq. Further, Bush used the U.S. victory in the Gulf War as an opportunity to try to wipe away the lingering stigma of Vietnam, an aspect of U.S. identity that had been a source of shame for 20 years. By the end of the Gulf War, his approval rating had risen to 91%, and attention was diverted, at least for a short time, from the difficulties Bush was having with the economy and the federal budget.

In the war on terrorism, George W. Bush drew heavily upon “the idea of America,” arguing in his addresses that the terrorists sought to destroy the very freedoms that defined the nation. He united and mobilized the nation through his nationalist rhetoric while simultaneously acting as chief executive, commander in chief, and national chaplain. At the same time, he was able to rise above many of the doubts and misgivings about his election as the American people responded favorably to his leadership during

the crisis. Like his father, his approval ratings during the study period were some of the highest in history. In sum, both presidents demonstrated the rhetorical power of national identity to shape public discourse, mobilize a nation, and achieve their political objectives.

### ***National identity and newspaper editorials***

The national identity-related discourse in the analyzed editorials of the *Times* and *Post* suggests several key points: 1) Editorials were significantly more affirming of U.S. national identity during the two crisis periods than during the peacetime periods; 2) Editorials in the crisis periods appeared to accept presidential framing of events more readily than in peacetime, often using language similar to the presidents' to affirm key elements of U.S. national identity; and 3) while editorials in both newspapers offered strongly American-centric perspectives during the two crises, their nationalism was neither blind nor unquestioning, as evidenced by the reservations expressed by both editorial staffs about going to war against Iraq without additional congressional debate and frequent criticism of the perceived erosion of the rights and freedoms during the war on terrorism. Each of these points merits some discussion.

On the first point, I found clear support for Hypothesis 3, that editorials would contain more national-identity affirming discourse during the two crises than during the peacetime periods. This finding lends *empirical* support to the contentions of scholars (e.g. Bloom, 1990; Brookes, 1999; Calabrese & Burke, 1992; Gans, 1979) and critics who argue that U.S. reporting during international crises becomes more overtly nationalistic and ethnocentric. In peacetime editorials, national identity exhibited itself in

much more banal form.<sup>4</sup> It was not characterized by inflamed rhetoric and the fervent waving of flags that became typical of the crisis periods; instead, national identity provided the underlying foundation upon which editorial discourse was constructed and issues were discussed. Indeed, I would suggest that in most of the nation's commercial news media, the underlying assumption is that the *national* perspective is the *natural* perspective from which the news should be addressed. Billig (1995) has compared this daily reinforcement of national identity in non-crisis periods to "the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building" (p.9). He describes nationalism, not as merely a flare-up of patriotism during crises, but as the "endemic condition" of established nations that enables the nation to be reproduced daily. I suggest that this daily reproduction of the nation during normal times is the necessary foundation upon which patriotism and loyalty can become heightened when crises arise and national sacrifices are demanded.

During the Gulf War and the war on terrorism, the "banal" gave way to the extraordinary. Editorials began to reproduce and reconstruct national identity in a much more overt and explicit manner, as the country encountered new enemies and threats and engaged in activities with the potential to enhance national prestige and esteem. In the

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<sup>4</sup> One weakness of this thesis lies with the criteria for selection of editorials, particularly peacetime editorials. I chose initially to code editorials in the week following each presidential address in my sample. This selection method seems to imply that that address was "affecting" or "influencing" those editorials in some way over an entire week, which the evidence suggests was not the case in peacetime. While one editorial in each newspaper during peacetime might discuss the speech the next day, the rest of the editorials in the week dealt with national issues irrespective of the presidents' addresses. To get a true sense of national identity in non-crisis periods, a random sample of peacetime editorials over a larger time frame would have been more appropriate than coding one week after each presidential address, particularly since I included so few peacetime presidential addresses in my coding. Further, in order to be methodologically consistent between peacetime and crisis periods, I presented most of my data in this study using only those editorials that fell one week after each crisis address, even though doing so meant ignoring a significant amount of available data (i.e. those crisis editorials that fell outside the one-week periods following each presidential address).



Gulf War crisis, editorials in the *Times* and *Post* affirmed America's status as a superpower and world leader without questioning the underlying assumption that the United States should play a role in resolving a crisis that was literally half a world away. Despite earlier misgivings that perhaps President Bush was moving too quickly toward war, the two newspapers fell in line once the bombs began to drop and by the end of the campaign were heralding America's military prowess, praising the heroism of American soldiers, and casting aside old doubts and ghosts from the Vietnam war. After the September 11 attacks the two newspapers, particularly the *Times*, reconstructed a shattered nation on their editorial pages, reassuring the country of its distinctiveness, its compassion and its fundamental strength as a nation and a people. Despite the devastation of the attacks, editorials were quick to point out Americans' resilience in the face of tragedy and their ultimate resolve to prevail in the new conflict. Further, the two papers frequently described a new national unity, borne out of grief and solidified in a new sense of national purpose; this new "unity" was a unity in which *national* identity superseded all other identities, and, at least for a while, domestic conflicts were pushed to the periphery. After September 11, the news media had free rein to "sound the trumpets" and "wave the flag" without being accused, at least in the mainstream, of being biased.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> While I am confident that the findings in this study are representative of the national news media as a whole during the two crises I examined, I must acknowledge that editorials in two national newspapers are merely a small subset of "the media." It is the case that other research I have conducted with colleagues (Hutcheson et al., 2003) found that news magazines closely paralleled the Bush administration's national identity discourse after September 11. Nonetheless, future studies of national identity and crises should examine a wide variety of media content during the two crises, particularly television, which is rich with both verbal/textual and visual cues of national identity, and most importantly, is the medium most people turn to first in a crisis.

In fact, pro-American coverage was not only acceptable, it was expected — a point likely not lost on commercial media outlets.

The second key point suggested by these findings is that in a crisis, the president has the potential to wield great rhetorical influence over the news media, both in how media frame the crisis and how they talk about the president himself. In both crises, with a few exceptions, editorials seemed to rely on the president's definition of events, rarely questioning underlying assumptions regarding America's involvement in the crises. For example, during the Gulf War crisis, the two newspapers debated the *means* by which Iraq might be compelled to leave Kuwait, but did not challenge the premise offered by George H.W. Bush that the United States had a responsibility to play a central role in the conflict. In describing the goals of U.S. intervention, both the *Times* and *Post* spoke not only of freeing Kuwait, but affirmed President Bush's goal of establishing a "new world order" and agreed that Iraq posed a threat. Similarly, after the September 11 attacks, editorials in the *Times* and *Post* immediately adopted George W. Bush's assertion that "war" had been waged on America, and that the nation's way of life was under attack. While editorials in the two newspapers offered a more complex and nuanced examination of the crisis than the president, they nonetheless resisted deeper examination of the motives of the attackers and the role that U.S. actions in the Middle East may have played in fomenting antagonism toward America. To do so would have meant scrutinizing aspects of the nation's identity in a way that few Americans would have tolerated. Indeed, individuals such as University of Texas journalism professor Robert Jensen who

publicly addressed these deeper questions found themselves the target of public and media backlash (Smith, 2002).

Further evidence that editorials appeared to be taking cues from the president comes in my examination of Research Question 2-A. I found that editorials in the two days immediately following each presidential speech had significantly higher NIMs than editorials in the remaining five days of the week after each speech. This finding was consistent across both presidents and both crises. I suggest that the major presidential addresses succeeded in setting “the national identity agenda,” at least in the short term, as editorials appeared to respond favorably with increased levels of national identity discourse immediately after the speeches. Just as the two presidents’ speeches were designed to mobilize the public toward support of national objectives, I argue they also succeeded in “mobilizing” the news media, who once again assumed the familiar role of “government’s little helper” (Zaller & Chiu, 1996). In sum, then, that the two presidents were able to successfully frame their crises and shape media discourse in the editorials of the *Times* and *Post* is clear.

Equally important, I contend, is how both presidents, as premiere symbols of American identity and power themselves, were able to achieve new stature on the editorial pages of these two newspapers during their respective crises. George H.W. Bush was able to shake his reputation as a wimp and emerged as a strong wartime president and a leader of nations. George W. Bush overcame early doubts about his presidential qualifications and in the eyes of both newspapers rose to the challenge of leading America through one of its most difficult periods in history. By praising the

character, leadership and crisis management abilities of these two presidents, editorials elevated and affirmed one of the fundamental symbols of American identity. In both crises, but especially after the September 11 attacks, the nation needed assurance from trusted observers (the media) that the president was up to the task. The affirmation on the pages of the *Times* and *Post* likely gave the reading public confidence that the president was pursuing the right course of action and that he possessed the presidential acumen to lead the nation through the crisis. I argue that this “elevation” of presidential stature ultimately contributed to the public support received by each president during his respective crisis.

The third key point suggested by my analysis is that while editorials in both newspapers offered American-centric perspectives during the two crises, neither editorial board was willing to cry, “My country right or wrong” and acquiesce to government actions that contradicted principles and values fundamental to American identity. In the Gulf War crisis, both papers questioned what they perceived as President Bush’s willingness to commit to military action before all diplomatic avenues had been explored and before Congress had adequately debated the issue. When the United States acted unilaterally to blockade Iraqi ports early in the crisis, both the *Times* and the *Post* called the move a misstep, arguing that as a world leader, America should have gone through the United Nations to mobilize world support. Similarly, after September 11, editorials in the two papers offered strong criticism when it appeared that civil liberties were being eroded in the name of national security. While the *Times* and *Post* agreed in principle with and endorsed the goals of the war on terrorism, they were not willing to sit idly by

when they perceived the government as violating the principles for which it claimed to be fighting. Further, the editorial boards showed no reluctance to criticize the president when they believed he was using his popularity to try to push through an economic stimulus package that they argued would primarily benefit the wealthy and do little to stimulate the economy. These examples show that despite the tide of nationalism in both crises, the media at times appropriated U.S. national identity *in contra valence* to the president and the government in order to question the handling of the crises. Ultimately, though, despite these instances, the editorial pages of the *Times* and *Post* articulated U.S. national identity during these crises in a manner that helped the two presidents achieve their objectives and mobilize public support for government actions.

Several individual-level and institutional factors, I believe, may have contributed to the strong identity-affirming discourse of *Times* and *Post* editorials during the two crises. First, in addition to paying close attention to what the president was saying during these crises, the news media were exposed to consistent expressions of bi-partisanship and unity among U.S. political leaders following September 11; and while this level of unity did not exist during the Gulf crisis, neither was there credible Democratic opposition and debate in Congress until just before the war began. With few strong dissenting voices within official circles, news media were likely to “index” their coverage (e.g., Althaus, et. al., 1996; Bennett, 1990; Entman & Rojecki, 1993) accordingly, echoing many of the same nationalist themes as the president and other government leaders.

Second, the two editorial staffs were (and still are) likely composed of Americans, and scholarship suggests that news reporting almost inevitably reflects ethnocentric biases (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978), particularly in times of crisis and war. While some scholarship (e.g. Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996) suggests that journalists differ modestly in their ideological beliefs from a majority of the public, it seems unlikely they would adopt an oppositional stance during a crisis where national interests are at stake. In the case of the September 11 attacks, the events of that day probably affected the news media as much as the public, particularly the media of New York City and Washington D.C. who saw the carnage and devastation firsthand. This type of exposure no doubt influenced the way these newspapers perceived the attacks and the subsequent efforts by the Bush administration to fight the war on terrorism.

Third, the two newspapers probably determined that a certain level of pro-American coverage was both appropriate and necessary to attract readers. In both crises, editorial staffs had to find a balance between dispassionate neutrality that could alienate audiences and overly jingoistic reporting that could ultimately undermine their credibility. It is likely that some individual journalists on these editorial staffs may have held different views about what these crises meant for America, but these views likely succumbed to larger "institutional" influences which placed a premium on maintaining readership. There are some indications that the American public believed the news media succeeded. In a poll conducted by the Times-Mirror after the Persian Gulf War, 80% of Americans approved of the way that the news media had covered the war (Pan, Ostman, Moy, & Reynolds, 1993). In October 2001, 85 percent of randomly sampled U.S. adults

evaluated the news media's coverage of the war on terrorism as either good or excellent (Pew, 2001), while in a November 2001 poll, 69 percent of Americans said that the media were "standing up for America" since September 11 (Pew, 2001).

In sum, I argue that that a variety of individual-level and institutional influences upon the news media from within (ethnocentric bias), above (government officials, bipartisanship), and below (audience expectations) contributed to engender an editorial discourse that strongly affirmed a sense of U.S. national identity during the Gulf crisis and in the months following September 11. For the news media to have done otherwise, particularly after September 11, would have been to run the significant risk of a patriotic backlash among a news-purchasing citizenry. The implication seems clear: A commercial press, by definition, will always be a patriotic press when the nation is threatened.

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## Appendix A

**Speeches for George H.W. Bush – Peacetime and Gulf War Crisis**(All speeches retrieved from <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/papers>)

	<b><u>Speech</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Period</u></b>
1	Inaugural Address	Jan. 20, 1989	Peacetime
2	Address on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress	Feb. 9, 1989	Peacetime
3	Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union	Jan. 31, 1990	Peacetime
4	Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia	Aug. 8, 1990	Crisis
5	Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit	Sept. 11, 1990	Crisis
6	The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis	Nov. 8, 1990	Crisis
7	The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis	Nov. 30, 1990	Crisis
8	The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis	Dec. 18, 1990	Crisis
9	The President's Radio Address to the Nation	Jan. 5, 1991	Crisis
10	Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf	Jan. 16, 1991	Crisis
11	Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union	Jan. 29, 1991	Crisis
12	Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Ground Action in the Persian Gulf	Feb. 23, 1991	Crisis
13	Address to the Nation on the Iraqi Statement on Withdrawal from Kuwait	Feb. 26, 1991	Crisis
14	Address to the Nation on the Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf	Feb. 27, 1991	Crisis
15	Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict	Mar. 6, 1991	Crisis

## Appendix B

**Speeches for George W. Bush – Peacetime and the “War on Terrorism”**(All speeches retrieved from [www.whitehouse.gov/news](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news))

<u>Speech</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Period</u>
1 Inaugural Address	Jan. 20, 2001	Peacetime
2 Address of the President to the Joint Session of Congress	Feb. 27, 2001	Peacetime
3 Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation	Sept. 11, 2001	Crisis
4 President's Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance	Sept. 14, 2001	Crisis
5 Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People	Sept. 20, 2001	Crisis
6 Presidential Address to the Nation – Start of the Afghanistan Military Campaign	Oct. 7, 2001	Crisis
7 Opening Statement by President Bush at his Prime time Press Conference	Oct. 11, 2001	Crisis
8 President Discusses the War on Terrorism in Address to the Nation	Nov. 8, 2001	Crisis
9 Presidential Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations	Nov. 10, 2001	Crisis
10 Address to the Nation: “The World Will Always Remember September 11”	Dec. 11, 2001	Crisis
11 State of the Union Address	Jan. 29, 2002	Crisis

## Appendix C

**Content Analysis Code Sheet: Presidential Speeches**

1. Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Paragraph #: \_\_\_\_\_

VARIABLECODE

3. Articulation of an Enemy (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Keywords/Metaphors Used to Describe the Enemy: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Articulation of a Threat (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Articulation of U.S. Efficacy/Strength (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Articulation of U.S. Weakness/Ineffectiveness (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Articulation of Values/Principles  
(Check up to 4 per paragraph: # = specific value)

Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_

8. Articulation of U.S. Unity (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Articulation of U.S. Divisiveness (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Articulation of Others' Support of the United States  
(Code for up to 4 – See country list for codes:  
# = specific country/international organization)

Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 4 \_\_\_\_\_

11. Articulation of Others' Opposition to the United States  
(Code for up to 4 – See country list for codes:  
# = specific country/international organization)

Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 4 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Articulation of Religious Themes: (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

13. National Character Dimensions  
(Code for up to 4 categories: # = specific category)

Enhance 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly Describe this Language: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Positive Historical References (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Positive: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Negative Historical References: (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

**Content Analysis Coding Instructions: Presidential Speeches**

The unit of data collection in this coding scheme is the paragraph. There will be *one coding sheet for each paragraph* in the speech. The speeches have been pulled from the presidents' web pages and these versions will be used to identify paragraphs.

Read these coding instructions with a sample code sheet close by for reference and thoroughly familiarize yourself with the coding rules and procedures. Once you understand the rules and procedures, read the speech one time through before beginning any coding. Get a feel for the main arguments in the speech and the rhetorical strategies being employed throughout the speech. Once you have read the speech through completely, return to the beginning and begin coding according to the rules below.

1. Start by providing the I.D. # at the top left to indicate which speech the code sheet is referring to.

1. Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1989
2. Address on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress, Feb. 9, 1989
3. Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, Jan. 31, 1990
4. Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, Aug. 8, 1990
5. Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, Sept. 11, 1990
6. The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, Nov. 8, 1990
7. The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, Nov. 30, 1990
8. The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, Dec. 18, 1990
9. The President's Radio Address to the Nation, Jan. 5, 1991
10. Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, Jan. 16, 1991
11. Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, Jan. 29, 1991
12. Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Ground Action in the Persian Gulf, Feb. 23, 1991
13. Address to the Nation on the Iraqi Statement on Withdrawal from Kuwait, Feb. 26, 1991
14. Address to the Nation on the Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf, Feb. 27, 1991
15. Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991
16. Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 2001

17. Address of the President to the Joint Session of Congress, Feb. 27, 2001
18. Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation, Sept. 11, 2001
19. President's Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, Sept. 14, 2001
20. Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People, Sept. 20, 2001
21. Presidential Address to the Nation – Start of the Afghanistan Military Campaign, Oct. 7, 2001
22. Opening Statement by President Bush at his Prime time Press Conference, Oct. 11, 2001
23. President Discusses the War on Terrorism in Address to the Nation, Nov. 8, 2001
24. Presidential Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, Nov. 10, 2001
25. President: "The World Will Always Remember September 11," Dec. 11, 2001
26. State of the Union Address, Jan. 29, 2002

2. Number each paragraph on a hard copy of the speech and record that number on the code sheet as you code each paragraph.

3. *Articulation of an Enemy*: Code "1" for statements that identify and define a U.S. enemy, including Saddam Hussein, Iraq, Osama bin-Laden, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. Code "0" if there is no mention of an enemy. Additionally, write down keywords and metaphors that recur that are used to describe an enemy, e.g. "evil," "murderous," "ruthless," "cowardly," "barbaric" etc.

4. *Articulation of a Threat*: This category captures language that discusses some sort of threat to U.S. citizens, the nation or vital U.S. interests. Code "1" if there is some threat to the nation or America's interests discussed in the paragraph. Code "0" if there is no discussion of a threat. For example: if a paragraph simply states, "Terrorists are evil," this would be coded as "0." However, if the paragraph stated, "The terrorists are evil, and they want to destroy our way of life," code "1." There is an explicit threat to the nation and the people in this second example. Description of the terrorist attacks also qualifies as "threat" as these descriptions create a clear image of danger/menace, even if the danger occurred in the past.

5. *Articulation of U.S. Strength/Efficacy*: Code "1" for statements referring to America as strong and having the ability to dominate its environment either within its borders or in relation to other nations. This variable and the next get at whether the paragraph shows *the U.S. or U.S. actors acting effectively or being acted upon* by another. For example, code "1" if a paragraph states, "The U.S. will not fail in its mission to liberate the Kuwaiti people from Iraqi tyranny." This statement indicates strength and implies that the U.S. will be "acting upon" another to achieve its goals. Code "0" if there is no reference to U.S. strength or efficacy.

6. *Articulation of U.S. Weakness/Ineffectiveness*: Code “1” for statements that portray the America as acting ineffectively or being acted upon by others. For example if the statement says, “The terrorists claimed over three thousand American lives on Sept. 11 and took America’s sense of invulnerability with them,” code “1.” This statement shows America being “acted upon” and indicates weakness. Code “0” if there is no mention of U.S. weakness.

**Note:** These two categories (*Strength* and *Weakness*) apply not just to U.S. actions against the terrorists or in relation to Iraq, but to all facets of U.S. activity, e.g. the economy, homeland security, crime, education etc. For example, if a speech says “drugs are poisoning our cities and tearing families apart,” you would code a “1” for Presentation of U.S. Weakness/Ineffectiveness because this statement discusses the negative effects of drugs on U.S. cities/families and implies that the U.S. has been unable to stop these effects. If a speech says, “We can produce more energy at home while protecting our environment, and we must. We can produce more electricity to meet demand, and we must. America must become more energy-independent, and we will,” you would code a “1” for Presentation of U.S. Strength/Efficacy since these statements articulate the U.S.’s ability and determination to improve energy independence. *Further, there may be paragraphs where you code both of these variables.*

7. *Articulation of U.S. Values/Principles*: Code for statements that highlight or emphasize values that are commonly held to be part of America’s national character. It is permissible to code for up to 4 American values in the same paragraph using the codes listed below:

**1 = Democracy (Freedom/Equality):** Statements that emphasize America as being synonymous with freedom or America’s love of freedom or America’s desire to promote freedom around the world. Statements that highlight characteristics of American democracy – democratically elected officials, “government by the people,” constitutional rights, laws, freedoms, equality between sexes, races, classes religions.

**2 = Pluralism/Tolerance:** Statements that highlight America as a melting pot of races, a nation of immigrants, statements about being friends to Muslims around the world, statements about how the U.S. is a society open and inclusive or all faiths, creeds, races etc.

**3 = Progress/Innovation/Achievement:** Statements that highlight America as advancing culturally, technologically, leading the way into the future. Statements that stress the ingenuity and innovativeness of Americans and the advance of American society.

**4 = Capitalism/Economic Values:** Statements that highlight the positive aspects of the U.S. capitalistic system – free markets, entrepreneurship, rags to riches, land of opportunity, etc.

**5 = Individualism/Self Reliance:** Statements that highlight the “American citizen” as self reliant, responsible for his/her own destiny. Statements that stress personal responsibility.

**6 = Commitment to Fairness/Justice:** Statements that highlight U.S. notions of justice or fairness, or statements that emphasize the U.S. role as a “bringer of justice.”

**7 = American Values/Principles (in general):** Statements that use terms such as “American values,” “American principles,” “American ideals” or “American character” etc. in a general sense without specifying specific values/principles/ideals.

**0 =** No values mentioned in the paragraph.

8. *Articulation of U.S. Unity:* Statements that suggest unity and togetherness of the American people. Code “1” if these statements are present in the paragraph; code “0” if the paragraph makes no mention or description of U.S. unity or togetherness.

9. *Articulation of U.S. Divisions:* Statements that portray the American public or the U.S. government as divided. Code “1” if these statements are present in the paragraph; code “0” if the paragraph makes no mention or description of U.S. divisions.

10. *Articulation of Others’ Support of the United States:* Using the country code list provided, code for countries, world leaders, international groups or organizations that express solidarity with or support of U.S. actions in either crisis. You may code for up to 4. If no position is ascribed to a nation/group vis-à-vis the U.S., do not code it.

11. *Articulation of Others’ Opposition to the United States:* Using the country code list provided, code for countries, world leaders, international groups or organizations that express opposition to or resistance toward U.S. actions in either crisis. You may code for up to 4. Do not code for mentions of an “enemy” nation (Iraq or Afghanistan) or leaders (Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden) because their default position is assumed to be opposing the United States. If no position is ascribed to a nation or group vis-à-vis the United States, do not code it.

12. *Articulation of Religious Themes:* This category captures explicit mentions of “God.” Code “1” for statements where the speaker makes requests to God (such as “God watch over us,” “God Bless America,” “God comfort us” – essentially prayer-type language) or



talks about God and his goodness in general. Code "1" if the speaker explicitly expresses the sentiment "God is on our side." Code "1" if the statement mentions prayer such as "Please keep the victims of these attacks in your thoughts and prayers." Additionally, if the speaker says, "The terrorists are perverting God's will," you should also code "1." Code "0" if there are no references to God.

13. *National Character Dimensions*: Code for language used by the speaker designed to enhance U.S. identity using the categories below. You may code for up to 4 per paragraph. If such language does appear, briefly summarize it in the space provided on the code sheet.

**1 = Heroism/Courage**: Statements that highlight the heroic nature of Americans, their selflessness, their sacrifice for fellow citizens; their commitment to duty.

**2 = Patriotism/Pride/Dignity**: Statements that highlight the patriotism of the nation or its citizens; loyalty to/pride in the country, described in terms of actions (flag waving, singing national hymns) or in terms of sentiment (feelings, mood of the nation).

**3 = Work Ethic/Dedication/Resolve/Determination**: Statements that highlight America's work ethic, dedication to the task at hand, ability to get things done under difficult circumstances. Statements that demonstrate the resolve of the nation to overcome obstacles or achieve victory.

**4 = Peacefulness/Compassion/Civility**: Statements that highlight Americans' desire for peace or Americans' peaceful nature; statements that articulate America's compassion toward other people (both within and outside the U.S.) or other countries (e.g. through humanitarian aid programs); belief in the inherent goodness of people.

**5 = Noble/Righteous Cause**: Statements that frame the conflict in terms of a "great cause," a "righteous cause," or language that indicates that the U.S. is not only acting to defend itself but to "save others" or "defend others" or acting on behalf of the civilized world.

**6 = World Leadership**: Statements that demonstrate the U.S. as being a world leader, taking charge, leading or organizing or dictating to other nations "how it's going to be." Statements that demonstrate other nations or the rest of the world "joining the U.S." or falling in line behind the U.S.

14. *Positive U.S. Historical References:* This category captures positive references and allusions to past wars/events/symbols/historical figures in American history. Code "1" for positive examples such as, "The U.S. persevered in World War II and helped rid the world of tyranny." The important thing is to look not just at what event is referenced, but *how* it is referenced. Again, look at the way it is referenced to determine whether it is positive or negative. Do not code neutral historical references that are merely statements of fact. Don't try to read positive or negative into the coding unless it is apparent. Code "0" for paragraphs with no positive U.S. historical references. Underneath write down the positive historical references that appear in the paragraph.

15. *Negative U.S. Historical References:* This category captures negative references and allusions to past wars/events/symbols/historical figures in American history. Code "1" for negative examples such as an allusion to America's failure in Vietnam or previous terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens. The important thing is to look not just at what event is referenced, but *how* it is referenced. Again, look at the way it is referenced to determine whether it is positive or negative. Do not code neutral historical references that are merely statements of fact. Don't try to read positive or negative into the coding unless it is apparent. Code "0" for paragraphs with no negative U.S. historical references. Underneath write down the negative historical references that appear in the paragraph.

## Appendix E

**Content Analysis Code Sheet: Editorials**

1. Editorial Date (MM-DD-YY): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Publication: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 = New York Times 2 = Washington Post

3. Headline/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

VARIABLECODE

4. Articulation of an Enemy (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Keywords/Metaphors Used to Describe the Enemy: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Articulation of a Threat (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Articulation of U.S. Efficacy/Strength (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Articulation of U.S. Weakness/Ineffectiveness (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Articulation of Values/Principles  
(Check up to 4 per paragraph: # = specific value)

Value 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Valence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Valence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Valence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Value 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Valence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Articulation of U.S. Unity (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Articulation of U.S. Divisiveness (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Articulation of Others' Support of the United States  
(Code for up to 4 – See country list for codes:  
# = specific country/international organization)

Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 4 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Articulation of Others' Opposition to the United States  
(Code for up to 4 – See country list for codes:  
# = specific country/international organization)

Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Other 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 4 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Articulation of Religious Themes: (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

14. National Character Dimensions  
(Code for up to 4 categories: # = specific category)

Enhance 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Enhance 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly Describe this Language: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Positive Historical References (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Positive: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Negative Historical References: (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Collective Language (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

18. Positive Evaluation of the President (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Negative Evaluation of the President (1 = Yes; 0 = No) \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F

**Content Analysis Coding Instructions: Editorials**

The unit of data collection in this coding scheme is the editorial. There will be *one coding sheet for each editorial*. Editorials will be drawn from the New York Times and Washington Post. In the case of the peacetime speeches, code all editorials directly related to the speeches or related to some national issue. Do not code editorials related to local New York City issues or Washington DC issues. If in doubt, code the editorial and make a note of its subject matter, whereupon a final determination can be made.

Read these coding instructions with a sample code sheet close by for reference and thoroughly familiarize yourself with the coding rules and procedures. Once you understand the rules and procedures, read each editorial one time through before beginning any coding. Get a feel for the main arguments in the piece. Once you have read the editorial through completely, return to the beginning and begin coding according to the rules below.

1. *Enter the article date (YY-MM-DD).*
2. Publication: Enter "1" for the New York Times or "2" for the Washington Post.
3. Record the headline/title of the editorial.
4. *Articulation of an Enemy:* Code "1" for statements that identify and define a U.S. enemy, including Saddam Hussein, Iraq, Osama bin-Laden, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. Code "0" if there is no mention of an enemy. Additionally, write down keywords and metaphors that recur that are used to describe an enemy, e.g. "evil," "murderous," "ruthless," "cowardly" etc.
5. *Articulation of a Threat:* This category captures language that discusses some sort of threat to U.S. citizens, the nation or vital U.S. interests. Code "1" if there is some threat to the nation or America's interests discussed in the paragraph. Code "0" if there is no discussion of a threat. For example: if a paragraph simply states, "Terrorists are evil," this would be coded as "0." However, if the paragraph stated, "The terrorists are evil, and they want to destroy our way of life," code "1." There is an explicit threat to the nation and the people in this second example. Description of the terrorist attacks also qualifies as "threat" as these descriptions create a clear image of danger/menace, even if the danger occurred in the past.
6. *Articulation of U.S. Strength/Efficacy:* Code "1" for statements referring to America as strong and having the ability to dominate its environment either within its borders or in relation to other nations. This variable and the next get at whether the paragraph shows

*the U.S. or U.S. actors acting effectively or being acted upon* by another. For example, code "1" if a paragraph states, "The U.S. will not fail in its mission to liberate the Kuwaiti people from Iraqi tyranny." This statement indicates strength and implies that the U.S. will be "acting upon" another to achieve its goals. Code "0" if there is no reference to U.S. strength or efficacy.

**7. Articulation of U.S. Weakness/Ineffectiveness:** Code "1" for statements that portray the America as acting ineffectively or being acted upon by others. For example if the statement says, "The terrorists claimed over three thousand American lives on Sept. 11 and took America's sense of invulnerability with them," code "1." This statement shows America being "acted upon" and indicates weakness. Code "0" if there is no mention of U.S. weakness.

**Note:** These two categories (*Strength* and *Weakness*) apply not just to U.S. actions against the terrorists or in relation to Iraq, but to all facets of U.S. activity, e.g. the economy, homeland security, and general statements that describe the strength/efficacy of the nation (for example, "This country will define our times, not be defined by them"). Further, there may be paragraphs where you code both of these variables.

**8. Articulation of U.S. Values/Principles:** Code for statements that highlight or emphasize values that are commonly held to be part of America's national character. It is permissible to code for up to 4 American values in the same paragraph using the codes listed below:

**1 = Democracy (Freedom/Equality):** Statements that highlight characteristics of American democracy – democratically elected officials, "government by the people," constitutional rights, laws, freedoms, equality between sexes, races, classes religions.

**2 = Pluralism/Tolerance:** Statements that highlight America as a melting pot of races, a nation of immigrants, statements about being friends to Muslims around the world, statements about how the U.S. is an open and inclusive society.

**3 = Progress/Innovation/Achievement:** Statements that highlight America as advancing culturally, technologically, leading the way into the future. Statements that stress the ingenuity and innovativeness of Americans and the advance of American society.

**4 = Capitalism/Economic Values:** Statements that highlight the positive aspects of the U.S. capitalistic system – free markets, entrepreneurship, rags to riches, land of opportunity, etc.

**5 = Individualism/Self Reliance:** Statements that highlight the "American citizen" as self reliant, responsible for his/her own destiny.

**6 = Commitment to Fairness/Justice:** Statements that highlight U.S. notions of justice or fairness, or statements that emphasize the U.S. role as a "bringer of justice."

**7 = American Values/Principles (in general):** Statements that use terms such as "American values," "American principles," "American ideals" etc. in a general sense without specifying specific values/principles/ideals.

**99 =** No values mentioned in the paragraph.

Then code the valence of that value and its relation to the U.S.:

1 = Critical (either "this value is bad" or "the U.S. never lives up to this value")

2 = Mixed (some positive and negative discussion of the value in relation to the U.S.)

3 = Affirming (associating this value with the U.S. in a positive way)

For instance if the writer says "The terrorists hate the very things we hold dear -- democratically elected leaders and the freedom to practice the religion of our choice," you would code a "1" (Democracy (Freedom/Equality) as the value and a "3" for affirming that value. If an editorial states "America's global economic policies contribute to the disparity between rich and poor around the world and foment the type of radicalism we saw in the Sept. 11 hijackers," you would code a "7" (Capitalism/Economic Values) for the value and a "1" for the valence.

**9. Articulation of U.S. Unity:** Statements that suggest unity and togetherness of the American people during the two crises. Code "1" if these statements are present in the paragraph; code "0" if the paragraph makes no mention or description of U.S. unity or togetherness.

**10. Articulation of U.S. Divisions:** Statements that portray the American public or the U.S. government as divided during the two crises. Code "1" if these statements are present in the paragraph; code "0" if the paragraph makes no mention or description of U.S. divisions.

**11. Articulation of Others' Support of the United States:** Using the country code list provided, code for countries, world leaders, international groups or organizations that express solidarity with or support of U.S. actions in either crisis. You may code for up to 4. If no position is ascribed to a nation/group vis-à-vis the U.S., do not code it.

12. *Articulation of Others' Opposition to the United States:* Using the country code list provided, code for countries, world leaders, international groups or organizations that express opposition to or resistance toward U.S. actions in either crisis. You may code for up to 4. Do not code for mentions of an "enemy" nation (Iraq or Afghanistan) or leaders (Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden) because their default position is assumed to be opposing the United States. If no position is ascribed to a nation or group vis-à-vis the United States, do not code it.

13. *Articulation of Religious Themes:* This category captures explicit mentions of "God." Code "1" for statements where the speaker makes requests to God (such as "God watch over us," "God Bless America," "God comfort us" – essentially prayer-type language) or talks about God and his goodness in general. Also code "1" if the speaker explicitly expresses the sentiment "God is on our side." Additionally, if the speaker says, "The terrorists are perverting God's will," you should also code "1." Code "0" if there are no references to God.

14. *National Character Dimensions:* Code for language used by the speaker designed to enhance U.S. identity using the categories below. You may code for up to 4 per paragraph. If such language does appear, briefly summarize it in the space provided on the code sheet.

**1 = Heroism/Selflessness:** Statements that highlight the heroic nature of Americans, their selflessness, or sacrifice for fellow citizens.

**2 = Patriotism/Loyalty:** Statements that highlight the patriotism of the nation or its citizens; loyalty to the country, described in terms of actions (flag waving, singing national hymns) or in terms of sentiment (feelings, mood of the nation).

**3 = Work Ethic/Dedication/Resolve:** Statements that highlight America's work ethic, dedication to the task at hand, ability to get things done under difficult circumstances.

**4 = Peacefulness/Benevolence/Compassion:** Statements that highlight Americans' desire for peace; benevolence/compassion toward other people/countries (e.g. through humanitarian aid programs); belief in the inherent goodness of people.

**5 = Noble/Righteous Cause:** Statements that frame the conflict in terms of a "great cause," a "righteous cause," or language that indicates that the U.S. is not only acting to defend itself but to "save others" or "defend others" or acting on behalf of the civilized world.



**6 = World Leadership:** Statements that demonstrate the U.S. as being a world leader, taking charge, leading or organizing or dictating to other nations "how it's going to be." Statements that demonstrate other nations or the rest of the world "joining the U.S." or falling in line behind the U.S.

15. *Positive U.S. Historical References:* This category captures positive references and allusions to past wars/events/symbols/historical figures in American history. Code "1" for positive examples such as, "The U.S. persevered in World War II and helped rid the world of tyranny." The important thing is to look not just at what event is referenced, but *how* it is referenced. Again, look at the way it is referenced to determine whether it is positive or negative. Do not code neutral historical references that are merely statements of fact. Don't try to read positive or negative into the coding unless it is apparent. Code "0" for paragraphs with no positive U.S. historical references. Underneath write down the positive historical references that appear in the paragraph.

16. *Negative U.S. Historical References:* This category captures negative references and allusions to past wars/events/symbols/historical figures in American history. Code "1" for negative examples such as an allusion to America's failure in Vietnam or previous terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens. The important thing is to look not just at what event is referenced, but *how* it is referenced. Again, look at the way it is referenced to determine whether it is positive or negative. Do not code neutral historical references that are merely statements of fact. Don't try to read positive or negative into the coding unless it is apparent. Code "0" for paragraphs with no negative U.S. historical references. Underneath write down the negative historical references that appear in the paragraph.

17. *Collective Language:* Code "1" if the editorial contains first-person plural references such as "we" "us" and "our." Code "0" if this language is not present.

18. *Positive Evaluation of the President:* Code "1" if the editorial makes positive comments or evaluations of presidential performance, leadership, character or ability. This category is designed to capture more than just an editorial's agreement with the president's policy, but its evaluation of the man himself and his qualities as a president. Code "0" if there are no positive evaluations of the president in the editorial. List any keywords or phrases that capture these positive evaluations in the space provided on the code sheet.

19. *Negative Evaluation of the President:* Code "1" if the editorial makes negative comments or evaluations of presidential performance, leadership, character or ability. This category is designed to capture more than just an editorial's disagreement with the president's policy, but its evaluation of the man himself and his qualities as a president. Code "0" if there are no negative evaluations of the president in the editorial. List any keywords or phrases that capture these negative evaluations in the space provided on the code sheet.